

**EXPLORING CONCEPTIONS AND DISCOURSES OF GENDER,  
SEXUALITY AND PREGNANCY AMONGST MEXICAN  
ADOLESCENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

This research, undertaken in a public hospital in Mexico City in the late 1990s, explores how the power dynamics of gendered subjectivities and how dominant discourses of gender- that is femininity and masculinity- influence the high rate of teenage pregnancies amongst working and lower middle class young adolescents. The findings suggest that gendered discourses and expectations strongly influence adolescents' views of education, work, sexuality and contraception, teenage pregnancy and parenthood. In particular, the thesis shows that gendered expectations about reproductive capacities- organised around binary and hierarchical constructions of femininity and masculinity- as well as the importance of the relationship with a man for teenage girls, strongly shape young women and men's attitudes towards sexual practices and contraception use. Although the findings generated by this study are from 1994-1997 they remain relevant, given that Mexico is still at the top of the list for adolescent pregnancy among the countries members of the OECD (2014). Health and educational programmes have not rendered any significant results in lowering the percentage of teenage pregnancy in this country in 39 years (Lovera, 2015). An important observation is that National strategies to prevent teen pregnancies do not include specific points of action around how dominant gender discourses shape adolescents' lives. The original contribution of this thesis is to show the importance of understanding how gender influences views on teen pregnancy in this context. The study demonstrates in detail how adolescents negotiate dominant gendered discourses related to sexuality, contraception and parenthood, considering if and when discourses of gender, sexuality, femininity and masculinity may be shifting and how. Overall, most teenage boys in this study still refer to their active sexual practices and their role as provider in the family to define their reproductive identities, while young women seemed to comply with dominant moral expectations of sexually passive femininity, defined mainly through motherhood. However, the findings also highlight how resistance to dominant gender discourses can take place particularly with recognition of teenage girls as sexual beings with needs and desires.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Signed: Miriam Weil-Behar

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved sister Deborah who sadly lost her battle against Cancer and did not have a chance to see my work completed and share this moment with me. However, as the following excerpt from her writing shows (taken from the introduction to the exhibition of her art work in Mexico City in 1998), she knew the struggles that a woman often has to go through to find her identity, while resisting strong gendered dominant discourses.

## States of Woman

“I want to be all that I am capable of becoming...”

Katherine Mansfield

This series of images was made over 10 years. Its explanation can only be a posterior reflection. The meaning of these images is profoundly related to my experience of being a woman, and therefore, although they may amount to no more than a diary, it is possible that the spectator will find in them something familiar or suspected that will bring back feelings of anger or reassurance.

When I telephoned in London to reserve my ticket to come to Mexico, when I gave my name I was asked: “Miss or Mrs.?”. Although in English there now exists a neutral term Ms., almost unpronounceable, it is not commonly used as it has connotations of rebellion or marginality. I always found it difficult to answer that question. Sometimes I answer Mrs. So that a man is implied, something which at times gives more respectability. Most of the times I answer whatever comes first.

This time I hesitated, truly confused and said: “I don’t know... whatever “, to which the person said “Are you married?” What does that have to do with buying an airline ticket? “That’s a rather personal question, don’t you think?”

“Miss or Mrs., virgin or possessed, Madonna or prostitute, good mother or professional, strong or feminine... These dualities exist and it is not women who have chosen the labels. Would it be a strategy of “divide and conquer”? After all what can be categorized can be dominated, and the person who allows his/herself to be labelled accepts the established system. I feel that we as women have so much lost our identity, that the fabricated images that surround us replace it, offering us and assigning us partial identities, always changing.

Why do most of my figures have no heads? I suppose it is because I have always been fascinated by the beheaded Greek and Roman statues which have been rescued from centuries of abuse. The body with all its beauty and defying strength, like that of the Victory of Samothrace, has survived, and even without its head, that stolen piece of her identity, there is still the belly which gives life and the breast that perpetuate it. Even without head or make-up these figures appear after centuries of burial and there is no doubt of their existence, or their wholeness or of their sex.

On the other hand Virgins have been robbed of their sex, and there are idealized precisely because of this. Beautiful faces without a woman’s body. Woman as object of adoration in her perfection and impotence.

My experience of being a woman is one of divisions, of constant battles against definitions that want to limit and control. This series reflects the feeling of fragmentation of my identity as a woman, something I have not yet resolved. Who can say they have?

Deborah Weil

## CHAPTER I. - INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. - The Thesis

This research explores teenage pregnancy and the meanings adolescents give to parenting in the cultural context of Mexico. The gender identities of these teenagers are viewed as connected to social learning and perceptions and strongly influenced by their socio-cultural context. The need to understand how sex and sexuality are discursively constructed and how individuals are positioned in and produced by discourses that describe them either as women or men within their particular culture at a specific time of their lives, are important aims in this work.

As I will explain in greater depth in Chapters II and III, biological sex in this work is considered as socially/discursively constructed (Foucault, 1978, 1982; Butler, 1990, 1997; Davies, 1989). In this view, 'maleness' and 'femaleness' are produced by discourse, and it is the different actions of gendered behaviour that perpetuate the view of gender/sex.

There is also an interest in this work, to comprehend the way teenagers are engaging in dominant discourses that regulate their behaviour to construct a sense of identity that fits into the norm and into the gendered expected behaviours, discourses and attitudes. My study also recognizes the importance of understanding how power works and shapes these teenagers' understanding of womanhood and manhood in the Mexican working lower and middle class society.

Therefore, I believe that cultural factors such as gendered dominant discourses and expectations -often unwritten social expectations that regulate individual behaviour- influence adolescents' identities, their sexuality, the couple's relationship, the use of contraception and parenthood (especially motherhood). I have reflected on the idea that the relationship and the born-to-be child play an important role in affirming the teenagers' adult sexual and social identities, and give them a higher status and power within their social milieu. The

argument of the thesis engages in key debates in fields such as discrimination, gender discourses and expectations, education, work, sexuality, contraception and parenthood.

## **1.2. - Teenage pregnancy in Mexico: Its Contexts**

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teenage pregnancy has become a major political and social concern. With the emergence of adolescent pregnancy as a problem, came a major expansion of academic research on social and economic as well as biomedical consequences of early childbearing.

One of the focuses of the literature on early motherhood is on its reportedly damaging consequences for the young women and their children (NAS, 1996 in Zabin and Kiragu, 1998; UN, 1989; Liskin *et al.* 1985; Chike-Obi, 1993) and on its negative impact on teenagers' educational (Pillow, 2006; Alldred and David, 2007) and employment prospects (Valdés, 1995). There is a reality about adolescent pregnancy that cannot be questioned. However, the arguments that have been presented to explain the statistics can be a source of debate. It is fundamental to understand that when considering teenage pregnancy, antecedents and consequences cannot be separated. Therefore it is important to give an overall view of Mexico- one of the largest countries in the world and one full of inequalities among its people- to understand the context of these adolescent mothers. The information provided next, refers mainly to the years 1994-1997- the period when the study took place- since it is important to situate my adolescents within the context in which they were living at the time of the study. However, more current information is also provided and shows why this study is still very relevant today.

### **1.2.1. - Mexico's economy**

Mexico is a vibrant and complex country. Five hundred years of European heritage have blended with rich native tradition; these elements in turn are increasingly overshadowed by the influence of its powerful neighbour, the

United States. Millions of peasants, speaking indigenous tongues, are being treated as second-class citizens, compared to the Spanish-speaking majority (Chávez, 1999). In urban neighbourhoods, poverty and great wealth sit side by side.

Modernization has meant for Mexico the deepening of inequalities between a small group of wealthy and powerful families and, a vast majority of workers and peasants that suffer increasing poverty (Pamplona *et. al.* 1993). Even though the main characteristics of modern societies are present in Mexico, the benefits its population is supposed to receive are far from becoming real. Between 1976 and 1997, the Mexicans experienced a decrease of 71.4% in purchasing power. While prices increased 102,770 percent during that period, the minimum wage increased only 29,369 percent (Vázquez, 1997). While 18.9% of the economically active population was earning less than the minimum wage in 1995, 65.1% did not receive any social benefits for their work (INEGI<sup>1</sup>, 1995). In this context, labour rights such as social security, retirement pensions and medical services were increasingly absent for the work force (García Guzmán 1994).

The report's statistics on extreme poverty issues from the World Bank noted that the crisis of 1994-1995 in Mexico, was a major setback: extreme poverty increased from 21 percent of the population in 1994 to 37 percent in 1996 (World Bank, 2004). Unemployment rates were particularly high between 1995 and 1996: on average 5.85% of the economically active population (CESOP, 2005)<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.2.1. - Teenage pregnancy on the rise**

Mexico has promoted family planning methods for more than 35 years. In 1973, it became the world's second and Latin America's first country in establishing in its Constitution (Article 4<sup>th</sup>) the right to decide in a free, responsible and informed manner about the number and timing of their children (Juárez *et al.* 2006). In 1974 different actions were undertaken to regulate the

---

1 The National Institute of Statistic and Geography

2 The Centre for Social Studies and Public Opinion of the Chamber of Deputies.

population growth in the General Population Law (SEGOB, 1974). It was not until the National Plan for Family Planning 1977-1979 was created, that there was a coordinated effort from all parts of the Health sector to promote contraception on its population (Mendoza *et al.* 2009). This brought together a fast decrease in the global pregnancy rate from 6.7 children per woman in 1970 to 3.43 in 1990 to 2.2 in 2013 (CONAPO, 2014). During the time of my research, the percentage was on average 16.5% (INEGI, 2009) and it is estimated that approximately 40% of these pregnancies were unwanted (CONAPO<sup>3</sup>, 2000b).

Specifically among teenagers, the National Survey of Demographic Dynamics<sup>4</sup> (INEGUI, 2009) showed that 38.5% of young women who had intercourse for the first time, used contraception compared to previous generations. This number represents an important change in use, since only 6.5% women between 45 to 49 years of age used contraception during their first sexual encounter during their teenage years.

However in spite of the progress made in education and health for women, the use of contraception has not reached everyone in an equal manner: there are still important shortfalls especially among the adolescent population, among people who live in highly marginalized municipalities and those in rural and indigenous areas (Mendoza *et al.*, 2009). In 2013 the World Bank's report<sup>5</sup> highlights that Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the region with the highest teenage fertility rate (72 births per 1000) among adolescents aged between 15 to 19, below Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (108 and 73 respectively). From the LAC region Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, Ecuador, El Salvador and Panama rank in the top 40 of the list of countries with the highest adolescent fertility numbers in the world. In this region the drop in teenage pregnancy rate has been slower than in any other part of the world in the last ten years. The annual drop in LAC was just 1.25% between 1997 and 2010, compared with other regions such as

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3 The National Population Council

4 Encuesta Nacional de la Dinámica Demográfica

5 "LAC: Poverty, Poor Education and Lack of Opportunities Increase Risk of Teenage Pregnancy".

South Asia (2.7%) and globally (1.6%). On average, 38% of women from this region get pregnant before their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

When talking about Mexico, statistics have showed that although from 2000 to 2013 there was a decrease of 16.2% in the fecundity rate of the general Mexican population, the fecundity rate among adolescents decreased only 7.6% during the same period. Childbearing from teenage mothers represent an increasing proportion considering that in 2000, childbirths from young women aged between 15 to 19, represented 15.7% and in 2013 this proportions increased to 16.3%. One in six deliveries in Mexico is, nowadays, from adolescent girls aged between 15 to 19 (CONAPO, 2014) and this country is at the top of the list for teenage pregnancy among the countries members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2014). However, data from the World Bank (2013) shows that Mexico City –the entity where my sample lived- is the place which has the higher percentage of teenage girls (58.9%) who used contraception the first time they had intercourse, compared to other entities such as Guerrero (20.2%), Michoacán (16.8%) and Chiapas (12.7%) in which less than one in five adolescent girls used family planning methods.

The risk factors identified with these high rates of teenage pregnancy are directly linked to poverty conditions and factors associated with inequality. The highest rates of adolescent pregnancy are concentrated in vulnerable groups burdened with inadequate health conditions and from homes with low incomes, very low educational levels and from rural areas (World Bank, 2014). The UNICEF (2010) reported that 55.2% Mexican teenagers are poor; one in five have family and personal incomes which are so low they are not even enough for their daily food and among those teenagers who leave school due to pregnancy, only 7% have an income that allows them to support their family.

An important point to consider is that in practice, the adolescents remain invisible to public policy and their needs are minimized. Most of the significant efforts have come from civil society, through lectures, workshops and other

activities that have sought to bring services to this young population (Welti, 2000; Menkes and Suárez, 2003). Stern and Reartes (2001) revealed, in their study about reproductive health programs for adolescents in Mexico City, the resistance and lack of professionalism of health care providers, to give teenagers the information they need concerning their sexuality. If urban adolescents face a lack of coverage, knowledge and access to family planning methods, the problem is even greater in the rural areas. It is admitted that adolescents face a significant unmet demand for contraceptives; mainly women aged 15 to 24. Not surprisingly, the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health for adolescents has greatly contributed to unplanned pregnancies. This lack or difficulty to access contraception is one of the factors responsible for the pregnancy of 6.6% of Mexican teenagers below 17 years of age. A proportion that has increased to 19.2% among young women aged 18 and 19 (Cruz Jaimes, 2012).

Together with this relevant information, my study intends to add another important variable to the list of risk factors identified with these high rates of teenage pregnancy. A factor which is linked to cultural aspects; the strong gendered dominant discourses and expectations that shape different views of girls' and boys' attitudes towards sexual practices and contraception and that interfere with the negotiation and decision to use contraception.

### **1.2.2. - Gender differences in the labour market**

It is impossible to talk about Mexico's labour force without immediately noticing the discrimination existing towards women. It is worth mentioning that although the information presented here is mainly about adults, it is relevant since they are significant models and their gender discourses are extremely important in shaping their children and adolescents' identities and ideas about the future.

Mexican women were pushed into the labour force due to different situations. Unemployment jumped from 3.4% in 1981 to 22.9% in 1987 (Pares 1990). Structural adjustment resulted in increased lack of labour opportunities among skilled workers along with increased demand for cheap, unorganized labour. In

addition to this, a notable decrease in salaries in the primary sector, pushed men to find better opportunities in other areas, leaving jobs -traditionally considered as 'men jobs'- to be taken over by women. On the other hand, the foreign firms, looking for cheap labour force, invested in in-bond plants (called 'maquiladoras') in which they preferred to hire a great majority of women, both because of their greater manual ability and of their stronger commitment to their work (Valdés, 1995).

Despite women's rising participation in the labour force family standards of living have decreased since 1980, along with individual purchasing power. Per capita income dropped 15 per cent from 1980 to 1989 (Benitez 1990). In the 1990s- the period when this study took place- almost half the Mexican population, 40 million people, lived below the poverty line and it is estimated that some 17 million of these, lived in absolute poverty (Pamplona et al. 1993). Unfortunately, this scenario is not just for women but for young girls too. Girls from low socioeconomic level, starting as early as age five and six years old, join their mothers in the tasks of home and field, having little or no time for themselves (Sai & Nassim, 1989, Valdés, 1995).

When considering the young population, figures show that during the first quarter of 2009, the economically active population (EAP) in Mexico aged between 15 and 29 amounted to 14.7 million people, representing 32.5% of the total workforce. This proportion is 1.1 percentage points lower than that recorded in the same quarter for 2006 (Ministry of Economy -Secretaría de Economía).

Unemployment among youth between 2006 and 2009, rose from 904 thousand to 1 million 248 thousand, which represents a growth of 344 thousand unemployed in these years. The unemployment rate during this period grew from 6.2% to 8.5%. This problem affected especially young women, whose unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2009 amounted to 9.1% while men stood at 8.1%. Statistics also reveal that only around 25% of women older than 15, had paid employment and they were paid considerably less than men for doing the same job.

Even more discouraging is women's level of participation in employment and income in rural areas. In this part of the population in the year 2000, men almost triple women in the category of employees (5.4% vs. 1.9% respectively). Among the population that receives more than five minimal salaries (between 51.95 and 54.80 pesos equivalent to approximately £2.8 for an eight hour journey); women are less in numbers than men (7.5% vs. 11.7%). It is worth mentioning that more than five minimal salaries is a pretty good retribution in Mexico among the disadvantaged workers (National Survey of Employment, 2000).

An important aspect, which shows the gender difference in the labour market in Mexico, is the difference in opportunities and salaries. Although women are as numerous as men in Mexico and have the same legal rights to participate actively in paid employment, their actual participation in this field is very limited. Only 29% of the economically active population in Mexico are women but only 23% of them earn a wage. The other 6% are either working in 'home-based industries', where they are not paid for their work or in the informal sector, where they do not have a fixed salary (INEGI, 2001).

Statistics also show that on the one hand, women receive in average lower salaries in most of the occupations and the discrepancies are greater when comparing professionals, supervisors and industrial foremen, as well as, public officials and managers from the private sector. On the other hand, there are a greater percentage of women who work and do not receive an income compared to men (13.4% vs. 9.1% respectively) (Estadísticas de trabajo doméstico y extradoméstico en México, 1995-1999). In addition to this, women with a higher level of education have more economic participation while men's economic activity is high, regardless of school level achieved (INEGI, 2009).

It is worth highlighting that the progress Mexico underwent to propel women into the labour force, did not bring significant changes in women's degree of autonomy. As Coria (2014) found, the sole fact of having access to money did not mean that many young women have been able to modify the power models that were incorporated within their own subjectivity. The patriarchal model that

has been present for centuries in Mexico, has been assimilated by many young women. This author explains that both men and women perceived the unequal use of money as natural and recognized that money is a male resource in power relations.

This situation is still nowadays preventing young women from achieving genuine autonomy. With regard to men, their frequent resistance to accept sharing substantive decisions regarding money, has often generated important conflicts which end up affecting the couple's relationship. Coria (2014) evidences in her recent book the validity that, the fundament upon which her first book (1986) "The hidden sex of Money" was based on has even now.

In addition to this, these changes to impel women into the labour force, did not bring significant changes in men's participation in housework; 90.1% of the economically active young female population in Mexico (76.8%), do housework in addition to work outside their homes compared to 47.2% of men (Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998). This situation complicates women's lives since they have to combine housework chores (which include looking after their husband and their children) with outside work, with little help from their partners and with little access to the income or to the power to make final decisions in the household or community (Chávez, 1999). Poor women in particular, lack the support system that permits them to join the formal labour market and must take jobs that allow them to combine work and domestic responsibilities (Valdés, 1995). These women's employment was and still is concentrated in the lower-paying positions in the informal sector, such as domestic service and food vending; 70 per cent of employed women in 1990 worked in the informal sector, and made up 96.6% of domestic employees (Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998).

The labour situation of many Mexican women, especially poor ones, as Suárez states, often goes as follows: First, given the social arrangements that women themselves seem to accept, when they work outside their homes they depend on the father's (or other males) permission to do so. Secondly, they have to contribute a good part or all they earn for family subsistence. Thirdly, except for some privileged cases, they have to accept responsibility for all of the unpaid work in the household. It is important to remember that, in Mexico, the entire

responsibility for young children often falls on the mother, even when she has an outside job. Fourthly and finally, women's jobs are not only socially considered a kind of 'second best' in relation to all kinds of 'family obligation' but are also, concentrated in the lower paying positions in the informal sector, such as domestic service and food vending (Suárez 1992 in Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998). Nonetheless as Valdés (1995) highlights, the advantage for women in Mexico, compared to others, is the extended family that offers better protection for widows and single mothers and makes it easier for young women who have children, to get gainful employment outside their homes. While at work in the big cities more than half of the young women and women can leave their children with close relatives who look after them without expecting any payment.

When circumstances of poverty are combined with a lack of paid employment opportunities for women, there is an increasing dependency on them by men and, men's power within the family is likely to be greatly enhanced and even sometimes legitimized by strong patriarchal cultural norms (Okin, 1995). As this information shows, gendered labour market participation has had important consequences for women's economic position. The fact that -1) often when women work outside their homes they depend on the father, husband/partner or other males' permission to do so 2) that the work they do is still concentrated in the lower-paying positions in the informal sector, 3) that they are paid considerably less than men for doing the same job, 4) that unemployment tends to affect especially young women, 5) that they must take jobs that allow them to combine work and domestic responsibilities and 6) that they have little access to the income or to the power to make decisions in their family- contributes to their vulnerability. Moreover, when the wives from the underprivileged sector receive a similar or superior income, men may feel their masculinity threatened and their role of main provider and as authority figures within the family, questioned. In this case, the couple's relationship becomes even more oppressive for the women (De Oliveira, 1998).

These findings are important in order to introduce my study since, the dependency on men by women highlighted here is also observed in many of my participants' discourses. My findings present adolescents' views concerning women's professional growth and show that the context they live in has driven a number of them to continue to be highly invested in traditional gender discourses, to regard a career in a woman's life as irrelevant and/or to consider strongly gendered career options. In addition to this my study calls attention to the prevailing gender division of labour or, in "the best of cases", the well-known double journey among most women that intend not to challenge the lack of male contribution to childcare and housework.

### **1.2.3. - Schools and sex education**

In most Latin American countries schools provide sex education. However, the focus is generally restricted to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases- an approach that has not achieved an important change in teenagers'- especially poor- sexual behaviour (Frayssinet, 2014).

In the 1930's sex education was one of the most significant and far reaching problems confronting the Federal Department of Public Education in Mexico. From the beginnings of the Republic (1822) to the creation in 1921 of the Department of Public Education by constitutional amendment, the Church and the Home had been the only agencies actively concerned in the welfare of the general population. After the State-Church separation the Home was then left as the sole source of information and guidance in the realm of sex development.

The high percentage of illegitimate births, the striking prevalence of syphilitic infections, and the amorality and immorality of the great masses, were clear evidence at the time, of the need for sex instruction of a systematic nature. Realizing the seriousness and magnitude of the problem and the almost diametrically opposed views of experts in the field, the Secretary of Public Education was extremely cautious in his effort to meet the demands of the

situation. An advisory committee was appointed to make a thorough study of the problem. In the final report of this committee, sex education was held to be absolutely indispensable for the complete and normal development and schools were designated as responsible to provide such information (Ebaugh, 1936).

However it was not until July 1993 that one of the first major steps was taken at government level and the General Education Law<sup>6</sup> was passed by the legislature. This law contained clauses on sexual education and included three important elements: 1) family planning and 'responsible parenthood' should be discussed in schools, 2) education should contribute to the individual's 'integral development' and 3) 'parents should be involved in education. All of these are central facets of IMIFAP<sup>7</sup>'s educational philosophy, a non-governmental, non profit organization (NGO), based in Mexico, working towards national school-based life skills and sexuality education in Mexico, founded in 1985 (Pick *et al.* 2000).

In Mexico, concrete discussions about sexual intercourse are never included in primary and secondary schools and vague information about contraception and AIDS, is not given until students reach secondary education, to which only a smaller segment of the population has access (Amuchástegui, 1998a). In 1998 sexual education was introduced in the fifth and sixth grades through an obligatory textbook for all students, which includes information about human biology and life skills. In September 1999, a new school subject called Civic and Ethical Training was introduced into the seventh and eighth grades nationwide, and extended to the ninth grade a year later. This subject has a strong life-skills development and sexual education component. Mexico's Ministry of Education then invited a number of authors and groups, including a publisher who works with IMIFAP, to participate in a competition to produce official textbooks on this topic.

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6 Published in the Official Gazette of the Federation July 13th, 1993 (Mexico)

7 Mexican Institute of Family and Population Research

Nonetheless all these achievements have been subject to heavy criticism from the Catholic Church and, from a highly vocal sexually conservative minority in Mexico, who has long impeded official acceptance of sexuality and life skills education programmes (Donovan, 1998). Conservative groups associated with the Catholic Church, such as the National Union of Parents (UNFP) and Mexican Family (FAME); represent a minority of Mexico's population, yet they have the resources and access to the media to act as powerful players in the policy arena (Donovan, 1998). These groups, together with church representatives have criticized the State's attempts to introduce sex education. In October 1991, the Catholic Episcopate and the National Union of Parents (UNFP) launched a media campaign against the Secretary of Education, accusing him of yielding to the 'sexual revolution' while at the same time characterising National Council for AIDS Prevention and Control in Mexico (CONASIDA) as people with 'sick minds'. As part of this campaign, it accused IMIFAP of ignoring the 'universal' values of Catholicism, of promoting 'sexual libertinism' by offering information on contraceptives and of addressing masturbation as an alternative expression of sexuality in two main sexuality education books (Pick *et al.* 2000).

In 2006, there was an attempt from the State to distribute a textbook of Biology for students in Middle School, as part of the sex education program. The former Secretary of Health, Frenk Mora called for sex education to be viewed as an investment that would help prevent future cases of sexual abuse and rape against women, as well as unwanted pregnancies. Frenk Mora argued that sex education should be based on scientific evidence in which information materials would be formulated by the Secretariat of Public Education for the population, while respecting the sensitivities of families and values of different social groups.

The Catholic Church's reaction to the introduction of the sexual education biology textbook was very strong. Both the Church and the Parents Union described this textbook as "pornography". Catholic Bishops and state governors demanded that the government remove the explicit material in those

textbooks. "We agree with the necessity of sex education, but pornographic information is something else," Cardinal Juan Sandoval Iníguez of Guadalajara told the Mexican newspaper *Reforma*. Sandoval criticised the Federal government for implementing the program, calling the decision "totalitarian" for neglecting to consult with the Church and address the objections of parents. The catholic bishops maintained that the new textbooks would give youth an incomplete picture of human sexuality and encourage them to be promiscuous or experiment with various sorts of sexual perversity (in Smith P.J. 2006).

In 2009 Mexico signed the Ministerial Declaration "Prevenir con Educación" ("To Prevent with Education") in order to reduce unplanned pregnancies and prevent sexually transmitted infections among adolescents. However, four years later, no progress has been made. The 2010 CLADEM study "*Systematisation of sexual education in Latin America*" acknowledged that, although Mexico, together with Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay were countries that have passed legislation and have come the closest to the concept of comprehensive sex education, they have faced difficulties in implementing programmes within and outside their main cities (Frayssinet, 2014). Although the Secretariat of Public Education reported that there was a 53% progress in the training of basic education teachers, a report from the Mesoamerican Coalition for Integral Sexual Education (Coalición mesoamericana por la Educación Integral en Sexualidad) stated that there was not an existing instrument available to evaluate teachers' knowledge of integral sexuality education (Cruz Jaimes, 2012). Cruz Jaimes (2012) believes this stagnation is due to the lack of political will from the Secretariat of Public Education and the indifference from the State governors and secretaries of Education, who do not want to get involved because they fear their actions could have high costs in their political careers.

As the information presented shows, the debates over sexual education in schools, rarely hear the adolescents' voices and understand their needs. They become shouting matches between those adults who promote abstinence only or use discourses of protection that argue against provision of sexual information -since it 'corrupts innocent minds' (Aldred and David, 2007)- and

those who try to provide contraceptive and disease transmission information to those students who do not abstain (Whatley, 1994).

This contextual information is highly relevant to my study since it shows that students do not receive adequate sexual information at early ages, while my findings demonstrate that more than half of my teenage girls had sex for the first time between the ages of 12 and 16. Likewise, this information shows that the existing programmes do not provide relevant information concerning issues found in this research such as gendered power dynamics and gender tensions, that may be generated by empowerment and equal participation in sexual topics. Sex educational programmes neither engage in discussions of desire and pleasure as my findings also highlights.

### **1.3. - CONCLUSION**

The contextual information and research discussed in this chapter gives an overall view of the background my teenagers have. It presents the social context and economy within which they grew up, one full of inequalities where workers suffer increasing poverty. It reveals the gender differences in the labour market that explain, at least in part, why only 2% of my teenage girls were working at the time of the study. It shows the discrimination women face at work and which places the emphasis in a context of shifting gender norms, for woman to 'do it all' (Ringrose, 2012) when they want to combine motherhood with work. It also contributes to the identification of factors that strengthen the basic patriarchal family organization, organised through gender binary constructs. It demonstrates how the formal sexual education provided in schools, does not help basic education in young people much, since it offers a small amount of the sexual knowledge students require to face intercourse and still silence conversations about sexuality, women's sexual desires and issues of power within a relationship. Finally it highlights how, for the popular sectors, to turn to family planning is a process that is full of ambiguities, and how the use of contraception can still be very inefficient due to a lack of information required for the adequate use of available methods.

In Mexico the interventions intending to reduce teenage pregnancy are still mainly focusing on poverty conditions, factors associated with inequality, contraception accessibility for some parts of the population- including teenagers and its high cost- lack of information and knowledge and, the quality of health services and of reproductive health programs for adolescents. However, the gender expectations that shape different views of girls' and boys' attitudes towards sexual practices and contraception and which are highly influential in the rate of teenage pregnancies, have yet to be definitively challenged.

This research intends to contribute to the study of teenage pregnancy placing it in the larger context of interrelated meanings, cultural beliefs and the assumptions and conceptions around it, strongly influenced by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity. It also gathers information to show that teenage pregnancy, often unplanned, is not just the result of a lack of information and education about family planning methods. It is neither a question of individuals not making rational choices about personal safety. It is believed to be the consequence of strongly gendered dominant discourses that interfere with the negotiation and decision to use contraception.

This study contributes to the understanding of how most teenagers are still directly or indirectly- influenced by dominant discourses that strongly guide their behaviour. It studies the cultural environment that influences adolescents' sexual development and identities, which is considered a key factor for understanding adolescents' sexual meanings, behaviours and motivations, as well as, their attitudes related to sexuality, contraception and parenthood. It also emphasizes the strong influence that young men's attitudes, desires and expectations within the relationship- largely based on dominant discourses and, male heterosexuality and expected femininity- have on young women's personal, sexual and contraceptive behaviour. This study not only gives information about adolescents' own views, but also about what they believe the general normative gendered views men in general have, on the topics covered here. The findings have implications for Public health agencies, school sex

educational curricula and reproductive health programmes in general. They demonstrate that family planning methods are not used by adolescents also as a result of a whole series of complex dynamics of gendered subjectivities, strongly influenced by persistent norms of feminine sexual respectability.

## **CHAPTER II. – GENDER DISCOURSES, MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES**

### **2.1. – Introduction**

My work explores how the power dynamics of gendered subjectivities and dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity, are highly influential in the rate of teenage pregnancies. The concept of patriarchal society is important in my work since the cultural notion of male superiority, women's discrimination and their lack of opportunities, are introduced as a natural from the early years of life in most patriarchal societies (including the Mexican).

Since the context of this work is a patriarchal society, I believe it is relevant to define it and explain why it is an important concept to engage with in this work. At a general level, patriarchy refers to male domination and the power relationships by which men dominate women (Millett, 1969). However, within feminist work, this concept patriarchy has a variety of different meanings. Some of the Marxist feminist literature has been interested in studying women's oppression in terms of the concept of reproduction, and in locating this concept within the social relations of reproduction (Beechey, 1979).

McDonough and Harrison (1978) state that patriarchy is concerned with the control of the wife's work in the family and her sexual fidelity and procreation. It is at marriage, they add, that "the wife gives both her labour power and her capacity to procreate in exchange for a definite period: life" (in Beechey, 1979:76). For Eisenstein (1979) these relations of reproduction are cultural relations that are carried over from one historical period to another. The concept of patriarchy, as Beechey explains, "had been introduced into contemporary feminist discourse in an attempt to answer important questions about our experience of oppression and to provide some comprehensive analysis of this" (Beechey, 1979:79).

In my work I take into consideration poststructural critiques of a universal notion of patriarchy, and see it as culturally and historically specific and as expressing itself through various discourses in context (Weedon, 1999). Likewise, as my research will show, in most of these cultures roots of early pregnancy reach deep into childhood and a strong perception about motherhood is internalized.

This chapter starts with the different ways in which theorists have explained trends in behaviour according to sex and gender, followed by the way masculinity and femininity are constructed, mainly among working lower and middle class individuals in Mexico and other countries. It includes information that shows how power works through discourses, often as a negative force (Currie *et al.* 2007) in a teenager's sexual life.

## **2.2. - Gender discourses analysis and theory**

There are different ways in which theorists have explained trends in behaviour according to sex and gender. Most competing theories of gender difference are grounded in a view of gendered behaviour as either innate or socially constructed.

The perspective that supports the view that gendered behaviour is innate, considers that the sexes are naturally different and that there are biological distinctions between men and women. Although not always in agreement on where these innate sex differences originate, evolutionary psychologists (Buss, 1994, Wright, 1994; Birkhead, 2001), biologists, neuroscientists (Browne 2004; Whitehead, 2002) and social scientists (Karmiloff-Smith, 2001; Gerhardt, 2004), do support the innate and natural difference perspective.

In contrast to these approaches there have been theorists who refer to the impact of the socio-cultural context in such gendered behaviours. Their perspectives consider gender identity as potentially changing and connected to social learning and perception (Francis, 2006). While social constructionists see men and women as biologically sexed influenced by the way other

individuals interact with them (Oakley, 1972; Paechter, 2006), other post-structuralism constructionists, see biological sex as socially/discursively constructed (Foucault, 1978, 1982; Butler, 1990, 1997; Davies, 1989). In this view, 'maleness' and 'femaleness' are simply produced by discourse, and it is the different actions of gendered behaviour that perpetuate the view of gender/sex.

### **2.2.1.- Michel Foucault**

Foucault was interested in learning how society is being constructed or shaped by language since, "discourses, as chain of language that bind us social beings together, play a key role in the social construction of reality" (Whisnant, 2012:6). More specifically, he worked to comprehend how it is possible for individuals to understand themselves in relation to others, and how they use knowledge constructed within practices and relations, to transform themselves. He wanted a way to access the 'thinking' that went into governing – how people were thinking about an issue. Specifically, Foucault wanted to uncover the grounding precepts or assumptions that people took for granted and did not question, the meanings that needed to be in place in order for particular proposals to make sense and to find support. He was typically interested in 'how' questions, rather than in 'why' questions – how it was possible for certain policies to be put in place:

"A critique does not consist in saying that things aren't good the way they are. It consists in seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of Established, unexamined ways of thinking, the accepted practices are based" (Foucault 1994: 456).

He describes individuals as positioned in and produced by discourses, explaining the gendered nature of society as constructed by gender discourses that identify individuals either as women or men and presenting these categories as relational (Davies, 1989 in Francis, 2006). In *Discursive Struggles within Social Welfare: Restaging Teen Motherhood*, Iara Lessa (2006) summarizes Foucault's definition of discourse as "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that

systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak” (Lessa, 2006:285). Discourses are neither consistent nor fixed and they “can be both an instrument and an effect of power” (Foucault, 1978:100) and therefore, people may be positioned differently depending which discourses they emerged from at a given time. As Foucault explains, a discourse is not divided between accepted and rejected, or between dominant and dominated “but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects- according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated- that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes” (Foucault, 1978:100). For Foucault, discourses are knowledges and practices. Subjects come to be formed or constituted *through* discourses/knowledge. That is, how we come to think about political subjects and about ourselves as subjects, illustrated in the use of terms such as “subject”, “rationality”, “consciousness” and indeed “agency”, is itself a product of authoritative knowledges, such as psychiatry and other human sciences” (Bacchi, & Rönnblom, 2014:6).

This understanding allows me to interpret my findings considering the social meanings produced within social institutions and practices in which individuals, who are defined or determined by these institutions, are, as Weedon states; “agents of change, rather than its authors, change which may either serve hegemonic interests or challenge existing power relations” (Weedon, 1987:176). In my analysis I focus on adolescents that, as conscious subjects, live their lives and give meaning to their social relationships based on a range and power of traditional patriarchal dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity to become recognizable beings; such discourse communicates and generates power; “reinforces it and also undermines and exposes it, rendering it fragile and making it possible to thwart it” (Foucault, 1978: 101). I concentrate my analysis on how adolescent girls, influenced by dominant discourses of femininity, attempt to become acceptable beings through a relationship with a

man -trying to fulfill ideas about men's expectations - and through motherhood. Many young men, on the other hand, hold on to gendered discourses that support a patriarchal family and social organization, even when they can place significant pressure on them to fulfil patriarchal gender roles -within society, home and the relationship- that produce and constrain truth (Strega, 2005).

In addition to this, Foucault analysed the way the social world is shaped through diffuse power relations that work through dominant discourses. Foucault' idea of domination was the different forms of control that can be used within society and of the individuals in their mutual relations. (Foucault, power /Knowledge: Selected Interviews). People interpret their situations to both accommodate them and struggle against them to disrupt, contest, and re-signify (Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982). Therefore, discourses give shape and form to a range of power relations between different individuals and institutions and are controlled by what can be voiced, where and how one may speak and who may speak (Foucault, 1982).

Much of Foucault's work is concerned with theorizing forms of power and its deployment, "a deployment that makes visible how the subject is constructed through social relations and cultural practices" (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012:54). From his point of view, what makes power remain valid and accepted is the fact that it traverses and produces things and discourses, forms knowledge and derives pleasure (Foucault, 1980). Power, as Foucault describes it, is "a repetitious and self-producing effect of mobile, strategical practices and relations within particular social networks" (Foucault 1990:93), where relations and practices are, 'continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors" (Foucault, 1980:74).

Power does not emerge from a single or singular source, nor does it operate in a straightforwardly repressive manner. Foucault views power as "productive or constitutive rather than solely as limiting" (Bacchi & Rönnblom, 2014:6), not as "*possessed* but rather as *exercised* in relations" (Eveline & Bacchi 2010: 144–145). For Foucault, "power shapes (produces) what it is possible to be" (Bacchi

& Rönblom, 2014:6). Subjects take up the places or “subject positions” available in discourses/knowledges (Bacchi 2009:214).

This study intends to provide information on the relationship among social organization, language, subjectivity and power to understand why young women accept social relations that subordinate their interests to those of men (Weedon, 2004). It shows how young people are positioned in discourses and navigate these discourse positions. How this notion of agency and power works through the way some teenage girls are starting to have a greater participation in the decisions about their bodies and their sexual lives by becoming sexually empowered knowledgeable individuals and making more assertive choices around their own sexuality. This includes recognizing sexual pleasure and eroticism and having a better communication about sexuality with their partners with the intention to free themselves from constraints and to open to possibilities of choice and agency.

Foucault emphasizes that discourse links knowledge and power, and as such, power is not merely repressive, but actually productive of knowledge and subjectivity (Macleod, 2014). It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together and for that reason, every relationship is a struggle and negotiation of power (Foucault, 1978, 1982). Knowledge for Foucault is both the creator of power and the creation of power. A power /knowledge reading involves interpretations of interpretations, which are found in the significance of cultural practices (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012:57).

As Macleod mentions, the productive or constructive nature of discourse is a relevant aspect of the work of feminists when considering adolescent pregnancy when trying to understand how scientific and professional discourses constructed or positioning teenage girls a subjects by examining their emotional, cognitive and social characteristics to explain the pregnancy (Macleod, 2014). In this process, power “is masked” (Foucault, 1977) by the modern discourse that locates the responsibility for action and intention within the individual. It is this masking, according to Foucault, that makes modern power tolerable. It is exercised “through its invisibility: at the same time, it

imposes on those whom it subjects, a principle of compulsory visibility” (Foucault, 1977:187).

“... It is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, come to be identified and constituted as individuals” (Foucault 1980: 98).

Foucault argued that sex and sexuality are discursively constructed over time and from culture to culture (Foucault, 1990). Therefore Foucault considered that concepts such as sexuality are discursive constructs that should be analysed in the context of the specific historical conditions in which they take place. As Salih, trying to explain Foucault’s position, clearly explains, “Sex is the effect of power, but there is no single agent wielding that power and power cannot be personified. [...] It is therefore important to analyse the *effects* rather *than* the causes of a power that is characterized as multiple, myriad and dispersed” (Salih, 2002:82).

However, there is a need to consider the ways that by repeating discourses adolescents can self-regulate their own behaviour to construct a sense of identity that fits into the norm and resembles the social and gendered expected behaviours, discourses and attitudes. This process of replicating dominant discourses and incorporating them into one’s individual understanding of the world is what Foucault (1978) referred to as ‘discourses of the self’. But there is also the possibility of awareness of the process and negotiation of discourses in complex ways (Francis, 2006).

Likewise, relations of power-knowledge are not changeless forms of distribution; they are, as Foucault explains “matrices of transformations” (Foucault, 1990:99). The distinctive characteristic of Foucault’s theory is not only to focus on the meaning of a discourse, but it also stresses the relationship between language and power. Discourse works by acting with power through the body and through people’s internalization of norms.

Taking up certain 'subject positions' means adopting particular ways of thinking about oneself and becoming that (type of) person. This proposition involves a dramatic rethinking of who we are and how we think about ourselves. Foucault argued that it is inadequate to think about rule as repressive (as stopping us from doing a range of things). Rather we need to think about how we are encouraged to be certain kinds of people and to do certain sorts of things. Therefore, power relations influence our subjectivity, how we think about ourselves. (Bacchi, 2010:6).

### 2.2.2.- Judith Butler

Foucault and his historical analyses of the varying constructions of sex and sexuality in different societies and circumstances, contributed greatly to Judith Butler's theoretical formulations of gender, sex and sexuality as unfixed and constructed entities (Salih, 2002).

"If there is something right in Beauvoir's claim that one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman, it follows that *woman* itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end" (Butler, 1990:33).

Butler's work has been concerned with the constant analysis and resulting changeableness of the category of the subject; a process she calls 'a critical genealogy of gender ontologies'. As Butler asserts, gender is "a modality of taking on or realizing possibilities, a process of interpreting the body, giving it cultural form (Butler, 1986:36). Judith Butler is regarded, by many, as *the queer* theorist par excellence (Salih, 2002). This theory<sup>8</sup> considers identities as not fixed and therefore believes that it is meaningless to talk in general about men and women or other groups since people cannot be seen collectively on the basis of one share characteristic. It deconstructs male/female hegemonic categories that limit identities to heteronormativity – gender roles that submit to cultural norms of female/male and heterosexuality, as the normal sexual orientation – respecting the heterosexual matrix of society. Butler argues that

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8 For more on Queer Theory see work from Anzaldúa G., Kosofsky, S. Butler J. and Berlant L

researchers should focus on describing how power works and shapes our understanding of womanhood [and manhood] in society. To pursue this Butler theorizes bodies as discursively constructed. "As a locus of cultural interpretations, the body is a material reality which has already been located and defined within a social context. The body is also the situation of having to take up and interpret that set of received interpretations... "existing" one's body becomes a personal way of to take up and interpret that set of received gender norms" (Butler, 1986:45). She claims, "the 'phenomenologically accessible body' (i.e. the body that is knowable by being perceived) and the material body, are one and the same entity" (Salih, 2002:84).

Butler's theory of performativity draws from Foucault's theory of discursive, capillary and micro power relations and seeks to theorize processes through which normative categories- that place rigid structures on how people live out their lives- may be challenged. As Jackson and Mazzei explain, "Butler's performativity relies on the linguistic action and explores (and exposes) how gender identities get done (and undone) as a reiterative and citational practice within discourse, power relations, historical experiences, cultural practices, and material conditions (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012: 71-72). Butler argues that gender acts are, in time, culturally constructed through repetition and this is why she theorizes gender, along with sex and sexuality, as performative- a performance that usually is not a voluntary decision. Gender, Butler maintains, is "a modality of taking on or realizing possibilities, a process of interpreting the body, giving it cultural form" (Butler, 1986:36). Therefore, gender is claimed to be a cultural construction. She maintains that all gender work in this way of performativity and represent an internalized notion of gender norms (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004). This is why, Butler insists on a performative understanding of gender- as opposed to the idea that gender performance is an expression of some sort of innate or natural gender- since the performance of gender itself creates gender.

As Butler (1993) states: "Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regulated and constrained repetition of norms. And a

subject does not perform this repetition; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance" (1993:95). Heteronormativity too is constructed and naturalized through performance. Performativity of heteronormativity is a repetition and a ritual that achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body and culturally accepted norms (Butler, 1997).

Drawing on Foucault, she develops her theory "Discursive Subjectivation" in which the person "is at once rendered a subject and subjected to relations of power through discourse" (Youdell, 2010:137). Butler's states, "that subjectivity is discursively constituted through a 'heterosexual matrix' of norms that constrain our ability to understand, act out and 'do' our gendered and sexual identities" (Ringrose, 2012:70). The construction of gendered sexes is within what she calls, using Foucault's term, "regulative discourses" or "frameworks of intelligibility", that specify the gendered sexual behaviours which are socially considered "natural" (Butler, 1990). She explicitly questions biological accounts of binary sex and is against the definition of "woman" and "man". In addition to this, this author states that a person has desires that do not emerge from our personhood, but rather from social norms (Butler, 2004). It is important to understand therefore, that discourses are not reducible to language; they materialize power relations through the doing and performing of discourses as articulated by Butler (Ringrose, 2012). Discourses are subject to transformations, even reorganizing older discourses or eliminating them. In the case of gender, femininity and masculinity practices are threaded through with power relations and although discourses, in specific contexts, have the power to convince people to accept statements as true, girls and boys do not just blindly accept them but negotiate them, influencing the hegemonic views they face in particular circumstances and particular locations (Paechter, 2006). For example, as Hey (1997) and Paechter (2006) explain, "In larger schools, there

may be a number of competing definitions of the feminine which coexist in a constant struggle for dominance; in this case, each of these is constructed not just in opposition to notions of masculinity but also against the other conceptions of femininity, forcing tighter definitions of what is acceptable in each broad grouping” (in Paechter, 2006:367).

In my work this analysis is important to help me interpret my data and gather my findings. This framework offers ways to critique the assumption of a natural order based on gender within relationships and change existing power relations between women and men. In womanhood, manhood and sexuality there are specific definitions of what is assumed to be normal or common sense based on gendered sexual behaviour socially considered “natural”. In many of the interviewees it is possible to identify how their subjectivity is discursively constructed and influenced by heteronormative norms that limit teenagers’ ability to take action over their own personal desires rather than from those emerging from social norms. Individual subjectivities and experiences, not ‘truth’ become -as feminist/poststructuralist theories highlight- the starting point for intervention. As Weedon (2004) points out, patriarchy can be subtle and difficult to recognize, therefore this analysis also helps create findings that focus on how adolescents are rendered subjects and at the same time subjected-through discourse- to relations of power. In addition, this theoretical framework allows identification of how adolescents transform some discourses by either reorganizing or eliminating them.

Therefore, as some feminists argue and as Butler also states, the terms ‘women’ and ‘girls’ are misleading and redundant, implying a fixity and homogeneity that do not exist (Francis, 2006:11). There are interrelated internal and external influences that bring about a constantly changing, localized collective view of what it means to be a girl/woman or boy/man (Thorne 1993, Adams and Bettis, 2003, Paechter, 2006). “It tends to be the *gender-traditional* behaviour of males and females which gets seized upon and analysed by researchers of gender and behaviour” (Francis, 2006:14). Nonetheless what is problematic (in terms of reproducing dominant power

relations), as Davison and Frank state, is the way “the naturalization of inequities is learned, replicated and supported by discourses that are historical products, but are assumed to be “common sense prescriptions for living” and, as they add, this situation “makes it difficult to engage critically with inequities that seem ‘natural’, and it can become uncomfortable when individual experiences of gender do not resemble dominant gender expectations” (Davison and Frank, 2006:154).

When Butler uses discourse, she is referring to as “large groups of statements governing the way we speak about and perceive a specific historical moment or moments (Salih, 2002:47). Butler’s theories assert discursive re-signification as the process of transforming social norms (Butler, 1993). Maxwell and Aggleton suggest in up-takes of this framework in qualitative data analysis “Agency is usually evidenced in moments of (active) resistance or re-signification (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010:332-333). As Maxwell and Aggleton explain Butler “tries to identify behaviours and speech which suggest possibilities for new subject positions (i.e. those which challenge the dominance of heteronormativity)” (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010:331).

The key theoretical interventions around agency- as Claire Maxwell and Peter Aggleton (2010) have found- have come from educational scholars working within what they define as two traditions deriving from Bourdieu and Butler. They review research using Bourdieu’s theories and concepts such as “cultural capital” and “field” which they suggest illuminates “the complex intersections of power relations and individual agency” (Allard in Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010:329). Hence as mentioned, discourses materialize reality, this is to say, they act through the body (Ringrose, 2012) and how this creates conditions through which agency is possible or not through the performative practices of individuals and groups.

As Tolman (2007) explains, these constructions of a young woman’s sexuality leave out “her sexual subjectivity” this is to say “her experience of herself as a sexual being, who feels entitled to sexual pleasure and sexual safety, who

makes active sexual choices and who has an identity as a sexual being” (Tolman, 2007:5). With little or no previous experience of sexual pleasure, as Holland states, “it is difficult for them to be constituted as agents rather than objects” (Holland *et al.* 2004:171). This disembodied femininity, can put teenage girls at risk, “since the moulding of their surface images and the disciplining of their bodies distances them from their own sexuality, and so from caring effectively for their bodily safety” (Holland *et al.* 2004:102) and therefore regard pregnancy as an event that cannot happen to them.

In 1998 Holland *et al.* described a conception of ‘The male-in-the-head’ in an attempted to disrupt the dualism of masculine/feminine by revealing the hidden power relations of heterosexuality and analysing the roles played by young people in reproducing male dominance. As she explained; “If the ‘male-in-the-head’ regulates the expectations, meanings and practices of both men and women, then femininity can be understood as a product of masculinity and of the heterosexual contract. [...] This notion can help in distinguishing the kinds of resistance that can be contained within the rules of the game from those which seek to change the rules” 2004:156). However, more recent writing has extended Holland’s concept of “The-man-in-the-head”. Different sociological studies have mentioned that the changes in the work market, the increased participation of women in the work area outside the home and the migrations, have modified the gender relations, the controls and meanings of sexuality and the sexual practices (De Oliveira *et al.* 1998; Bronfman and Minello, 1995; Bronfman and Rubin-Kurtzman, 1995; Szasz, 1998b; Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998). These changes show new forms of agency (Allen, 2003; Youdell 2005; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010) or rupture (Renold and Ringrose 2008) in young women’s narratives and practices, identifying young women’s “systematised understandings of power” laying the foundations for “more sustained forms of agentic practice” (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010:341). In-depth studies suggest a significant recognition of sexual pleasure and eroticism among younger women and a better communication about sexuality with their partners (Amuchástegui, 1994-1999; Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Szasz, 1998a).

These ideas are relevant when considering teenage pregnancy and motherhood since it is important to identify signs of agency that adolescent girls are starting to show through the resistance or re-signification of their role within society and within their relationship with men. It is essential therefore, to understand how it is that discourses act upon individuals and how subjects negotiate these discourses that influence the outcomes in the area of sexuality and teenage pregnancy, as I explore in my analysis of research findings.

As Ringrose express Butler's theories are important "in offering further tools for understanding the psychological complexities of subjectification and specifically in theorising re-signification of injurious norms" (Ringrose 2012:79). As Ringrose explains, "Butler's theories offer possibilities of change through discursive misrecognition and misfire, when interpellation is not secured in the intrapsychic exchange between subjects. This theory has offered space for thinking about how re-signification of signs or words happens in unpredictable moments where signs are reworked (Ringrose, 2012:71).

These theories were useful in my analysis to identify the ways some adolescents are still engaging in discourses of gender that limit their potential for agentic decision making to regulate their own behaviour and construct a sense of feminine identity (Foucault, 1980), while others are showing possibilities for 'rupture' (Renold and Ringrose, 2008) or agentic practices (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010) by trying to construct different feminine and masculine identities through struggling between traditional models and developing ones of culturally rooted notions of femininity and masculinity.

### **2.3. - Construction of Masculinity and Femininity**

As Lico and Luttrell (2011) explain, "our identities are formed by multiple and sometimes competing images and voices about who we are, how we should look and feel, what we should want for ourselves, who we should associate with and so forth" (2011:673). The behavioural expression of masculinity and femininity are mainly acquired through socialization leading to the internalisation

of 'male' and 'female' attitudes and values, which are culturally anchored (Mundigo, 1995). To what extent these beliefs correspond to the actual characteristics of those people, is of little importance, since the gender discourses are both consciously and unconsciously adopted and their influence in human social behaviour is very strong (Huici and Moya, 1997; Amorós, 1995). As Pillow (2002) states, "it is obvious that while we are born with a sex, gender positions our identity" (2002:11). However, masculinity and femininity are difficult to define, because each society views men and women differently.

"The members of any given society do not necessarily "share" all the meanings and values attributed to different masculinities and femininities, but they do share a framework, a "discourse," if you will, within which they might argue about values and meanings. Different masculinities and femininities represent different kinds of values within this discourse, and such values are negotiated in specific moments and spaces of a society's or institution's social life" (Levinson, 1996:3).

Moreover, masculinity and femininity are also fragile traits that need to be worked on, won, and then defended, since teenagers can easily lose them when evaluated by the strict expectations in their society (Holland *et al.* 1998). As other studies have shown (Edley and Wetherill, 1997; Mac An Ghail, 1994) "masculinity exists only in relation to femininity and is constructed, through everyday discourses, in various 'versions' or masculinities" (in Frosh *et al.* 2003:85). Therefore, different types of masculinity and femininity are constructed out of options made accessible in different societies and cultures.

### **2.3.1. - Masculinity**

In this section I explore research on the specific manifestations of discourses of masculinity in Mexican culture through drawing on culturally contextualised literature.

Connell (1990) for example talks about "*hegemonic masculinity*" to define the "culturally idealized form of masculine character" (1990:83) that highlights "the connecting of masculinity to toughness and competitiveness" as well as "the subordination of women" and "the marginalization of gay men" (1990:94).

Connell argues that such an idealized form of masculinity becomes hegemonic when it is widely recognized in a culture and when that recognition and acceptance reinforces the dominant gender ideology of the culture. Connell's theory recognises both the array of gendered identities and gendered practices as well as the structural relations of power (Scourfield, 2005).

The concepts of masculinity in Mexico are encapsulated in the word "*Machismo*", which is a construct that- although derived from Mexican culture- also applies in a similar way to other Latinos. "Machismo" was popularized in the social literature of the fifties and sixties. It was originally introduced as a Latin American phenomenon that appeared in its basic form in the peasant and working class (Ramírez, 1999). In the Latino culture, Machismo is more than just a word. It is so embedded in the culture that it is not only accepted, but also often expected (Mendoza, 2009). It is repeatedly defined as a set of attitudes, behaviours and practices that characterize men (Ramírez, 1999).

Some authors pay more attention to individual psychological characteristics. To a large extent, machista men are categorized as individuals who are aggressive, oppressive, narcissistic, emotionally insensitive, womanizers, insecure, loud-mouthed and people who like to party and get drunk (Ramírez, 1999, Mendoza, 2009).

From a sexual point of view, macho men are described as people with uncontrollable sexual prowess and with a need to have a lot of children, since this behaviour is seen as a proof their virility (Galanti, 2003). As Stevens points out, *machismo* is the "cult of virility" (1976:90). When studying sociocultural aspects of human fertility, Stycos described *machismo* as "the drive in males to manifest their virility" (1958:9). This author explained that machismo could have other effects on fertility since an anxiety to disprove sterility encourages a rapid first birth. Likewise, the fear of not being able to have a male offspring and therefore to prove that he can "make males", may encourage higher fertility where female offspring occur earlier in birth order. Serial marriage and extramarital activity may be partly products of a need to demonstrate sexuality and finally, the negative attitudes towards birth control- for example the

resistance to the condom in the way of preference for the "clean spur" (escuela limpia)- might be interpreted as a product of a "virility-manifesting drive" (Stycos 1958 in Ramírez, 1999:246).

Other researchers focus more on social, economical, and historical factors that intervene in the development of machismo, especially in Latin America. This literature mainly discusses aspects such as the system of male superiority, subordination of women, and power conflicts among men (Álvarez, 2007, Chávez, 2010, Sternberg, 2000). In a study undertaken in Argentina- on the sphere of intra-familial relations- the opinions of teenagers of both sexes reflected an acceptance of the assigned traditional gender roles to men; the man is supposed to give orders, bring money home and protect the family (Geldstein & Pantelides, 1997).

At its most extreme, *machismo* maintains asymmetrical power within men and women's relationships. Men's superiority over women is seen as normal and grants them the freedom to do as they please within and outside the family home. Likewise, this dominance gives them the authority to restrict the freedom of their wives and daughters (Chávez, 1999; Sternberg, 2000). As one of Chávez's participants define it:

"[Machismo is] When a man makes a woman do all he wants all the time. He has to feel superior to a woman. Making her feel less so he feels better. Feeling superior to a woman. If she doesn't do what he wants sometimes there's violence. Machismo for me means violence. Feeling superior to the other person and humiliating the other person. Either man or woman" (Participant 13, in Chávez, 2010:35).

Masculine men are also expected to be in control of women and violence can be used to exert such control. These cultural ideals together with the discrimination of women, their lesser physical strength and their economic dependence upon men, allows the physical, sexual and/or psychological abuse seen in many cases of domestic violence (UN, 1995; Global Fund for Women Report, 1992 in Okin, 1995).

It is important to highlight that male exercise of authority is so ubiquitous that it isn't just accepted by many, both women and men as "natural" but, the dominant ideal of manhood which emphasises toughness, strength and expression of prodigious sexual success, is a form of masculinity that many women desire (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010). Men's power is a learned behaviour, a privilege, a reward, earned or arbitrary, granted and taken away. On the other hand, instead of some women resisting this, the dominant ideal of femininity embraces compliance and tolerance of violent and hurtful behaviour, including infidelity (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010).

The most dangerous part of this, however, is the fact that many women who observe domestic violence from a young age excuse, and can even judge, a man if he doesn't show a strong temper. Girls from low-income families in Recife, Brazil, dislike violence, but they believe that: "Being bossed around by one's boyfriend is seen by some as proof of love and a sign that their partner is fulfilling his masculine role... It inspires trust, giving them the sensation that there is a man who will care for them" (Vasconcelos *et al.* 1997: 201). As a Mexican woman also expresses "A husband has the right to hit his wife if the food isn't ready or because he comes home from work and the fire isn't ready" (Glantz and Halperin, 1996:175).

Therefore, in the end, violence is apparently justified or explained in many ways; men are violent because women did not do their duty as wives, they were not obedient or they did not give them children, because there was money or because there was not, because they were drunk or simply because that is the way men are. As Galanti, in her overview of traditional Hispanic family and male-female relationships, quotes one of her Hispanic college students:

"A good wife should be submissive and take orders from her husband. She could not question him but rather should stand behind whatever he decides, even if she disagrees. She must also be tolerant of his behavior" (Galanti, 2003:183).

Stern *et al.* (2001) in an ethnographic research and in-depth interviews within Mexican communities, identified two recurrent ideas with regard to the construction of masculinity in teenagers: 1) “The need to show oneself and be accepted publicly as a male by peers, adults and women”; 2) “The perception of sexuality as a natural instinct which confirms virility” (Stern *et al.* 2001:8). In this sense, the central features of the Mexican masculine stereotype presents the adolescent as a courageous, risk taking person, ready to infringe controls not only in the realm of sexuality but also in other practices such as the consumption of drugs, alcohol and sex with different women, all with the purpose to publicly prove that he is a true man.

Keijzer (1998) found in his workshop about Mexican Fatherhood in 1993, that men who were involved in home cores and children`s care, often faced frequent critics from some close social networks. In Central America people say about this kind of man that “le canta la gallina” (the hen sings to him) and in México he is called a “mandilón” (hen-pecked husband or wimp), expressions that show the social control mechanisms use to prevent change (Keijzer, 1998:314).

Arciniega’s study with Mexican American young and less educated men, found that his participants didn't see their manly characteristics as negative. They viewed themselves as assertive men who stood up for themselves and were the heads of their household.

Another aspect of Mexican masculinity is the expression of emotions (Chávez, 2010; Arciniega *et al.* 2008). Chávez found that her participants talked about weakness and gender stereotypes that differentiate men from women. Her sample acknowledged that men are not emotional because it is viewed as inappropriate for them to engage in a behaviour associated with women.

“I have seen men cry when they are drunk. They think it makes them less than a man to show their emotions. They are men so they aren’t supposed to show their emotions because only women do and some men don’t” (Participant 5, in Chávez, 2010:38).

The term machismo usually has a negative connotation, however within the Latino culture, it also has positive aspects that are usually neglected, among which, courage, strength, responsibility and perseverance are mentioned (Ramírez, 1999; Wood and Price, 1997). They are also described as strong-minded individuals, protectors of their extended family and with a powerful personality (Wood and Price, 1997).

Arciniega (2008) believes- and other researchers agree- that a fuller conception would consist of two different constructs: traditional *machismo* and *caballerismo*<sup>9</sup>. *Caballerismo*, is a positive image of a man as responsible and honest, who recognizes his social obligations, is generous, courageous and brave, as well as, the family provider who respects and cares for his family and his community (Arciniega *et al.* 2008; Lara-Cantu, 1989; Mirandé, 1997; Neff, 2001, Alonso, 1995). In his study, Arciniega describe men as chivalrous, nurturing and noble. These men felt value in their family relationships and were in touch with their feelings and the feelings of others. They also displayed more practical ways of solving their problems. Needless to say, legitimate authority, is only conferred upon those men who achieve a balance between these two constructs (Alonso, 1995).

It is important to note that some scholars have argued against this negative conception of *machismo* as being too restrictive and not well defined (Felix-Ortiz, *et al.* 2001; Gutmann, 1996; Mirandé, 1997; Rodríguez Martínez 1996). Although the dominant picture of working-class masculinity that permeates academic literature and the media continues to be consistent with traditional representations of masculinity, there is research base work that is considering the changing nature of gender identity -mainly masculinities- within the context of a noteworthy social transformation (Anderson, 2005; McDowell, 2003, Nayak, 2006; Richardson, 2010; Roberts, 2012). Masculinities have been recognised

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9 The contradiction in the meaning of "manhood" – macho / gentleman- resulted in Arciniega pursuing an extensive study in the Mexican-American community. The resulting research article "Towards a Fuller Conception of Machismo: Development of a Traditional Machismo and Caballerismo Scale" was published by the Journal of Counseling Psychology (2008)

in their plurality for over two decades, as has the contested and contradictory nature of the construction of masculine identity.

Connell highlights that there are "different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self" (Connell, 2000:10). Therefore it is important to acknowledge, as Roberts states, "the *plurality* of masculinities that exist and the hierarchical relations of dominance, alliance and subordination between them" (Roberts, 2012:3). There is a need- (Connell, 1996; Davies, 1997) as different researchers believe- to consider the way boys act as masculine and their masculine identities, as practices strongly influenced by gender that are "relational, contradictory and multiple" (Frosh *et al.* 2003:84). As Frosh *et al.* explain there is "a gap in our current understanding of boys and masculinities is of complex notions of what it means to 'do boy' in specific contexts- of the multifarious ways in which young masculinities are made" (Frosh *et al.* 2003:84).

It has also been found that, as Richardson explains, that "men enact masculinity in different ways, depending not only on their social characteristics but also on the dynamics of the social spaces in which such enactments take place, whether this is a more private or public setting" (Richardson, 2010:738). Therefore it is important to focus on the study of 'new forms of masculinity more in tune with the dominant attributes of a service-based economy [...] have yet to find any expression' (McDowell, 2003:226, Nayak, 2006; Richardson, 2010; Roberts, 2012). As Nayak explains:

"In an insecure post-industrial society working class young men must forge new youth transitions. This entails rethinking what it is to be a 'man' beyond the world of industrial paid employment" (Nayak, 2006:813).

Likewise, the nonfulfillment of ideals that are consistent with previous generations of working-class masculinity, apparently do not stop young men now a day from gaining a valid culturally form of masculinity. Attitudes towards

traditional gender ideology are somewhat being 'softened' (McCormack and Anderson, 2010). As Roberts note in his study:

“Some working-class young men discursively construct and imagine lives that are indicative of a social-historical moment characterised by inclusive masculinity, with aspects of femininity that once presented a threat to masculine ideals appearing to hold less cultural sway” (Roberts, 2012:14).

For example, Gill (2003) has found that a rejection of traditionally masculine ideas related to domestic labour for future fathers and partners involved in a committed relationship, is often linked to the concept of 'the new man', a constructed image characterised by emotional awareness, respect towards women, sensibility and equity. Nonetheless as McDowell, identified- even after revealing multiple ways of “doing” masculinity- still a “dominance of a version of traditional, sexist masculinity, in both laddish behaviours exhibited in leisure arenas and in the domestic attitudes that affect workplace attitudes” (McDowell, 2003:226). Vivas found that, at a discursive level, her male interviewees accepted the changes in the traditional roles between men and women. However, a lack of commitment was present to change the asymmetric gender relationship in the everyday life (Vivas, 1994).

It is important to consider, when talking about masculinities, different researchers who have studied gender and identity and who have drawn attention to “an apparent 'crisis' in contemporary forms of masculinity” evidenced by doubts over identity, gender roles and expectations, sexuality and relationships among others (Frosh, 1994, 2000; Jukes, 1993), “in a context in which surrounding images of masculinity are complex and confused” (Frosh *et al.* 2003:84). As Frosh *et al.* (2003) state, there is a need “to include a recognition both of the power of social 'discourses' to govern boys' identity construction and behaviour, and of the extent to which boys nevertheless often seek alternative ways of 'doing boy’” (Frosh *et al.* 2003:87).

Roberts' study reminds us that the 'appropriate', respected and even hegemonic way of 'being a man', is contingent upon the social, historical and, often the very

specific context. Therefore more than one form of masculinity can be situated at the summit of the hierarchy of hegemonic relations at any one point. As Roberts explains:

“These changes and continuities appear with a degree of complexity that compels us to rethink the assessment that new forms of masculinity more in tune with the dominant attributes of a service-based economy, have yet to find any expression” (Roberts, 2012:14).

### **2.3.2. - Femininity**

Especially in patriarchal societies, men control the public domain while women tend to be located in the domestic domain. Woman’s responsibility centres in the care and welfare of family members. Not only does she provide reproductive and social services such as caring for the husband, children and the elderly but she also assumes responsibility for household food security (United Nations, 1995).

The set of cultural expectations or gender stereotyping (Pillow, 2002) for girls found in different researches include, being unassertive, emotional, instinctive, docile, vulnerable, with a family commitment, respectful of the authority and having limitations of their mobility (DeLeon, 1996). As Paechter (2006) has noticed, niceness also becomes important in preparing middle-class girls for social and educational success and central to group ideas about femininity. As this author explains, the construction of femininity suppresses girls’ individual assertiveness and as girls grow older the construction as physically passive gradually increases.

Acting out the heterosexual roles experienced at home since childhood, is also part of the girls and young women’s “apprenticeship to wider, adult conceptions of femininity” (Paechter, 2006:370). As Walkerdine (1991) argues, young girls in nursery school use domestic play to take on the role of the dominant mother in the home. As the girls get older, however, an overt heterosexuality becomes increasingly important to collective ideas of femininity. The collective

construction of heterosexual femininity takes place in relation to media sexualized images of teenagers' bodies and in the context of collective readings of these through discussion of popular soap operas and magazines (Kehily, 1999; Paechter, 2006). As Ringrose argues, "concerns over girls and sexualisation relate to maintaining classed and raced moral boundaries and regulating appropriate norms of feminine sexuality" (Ringrose, 2012:43). The idealized female role also includes the virgin who is pure and the mother who is self-sacrificing (Amuchástegui, 1998a; Tolman, 2002; Denner and Dunbar, 2004).

Mexico is mainly a catholic country where religion has also influenced gender relations and gender roles in an important way (Hirsch, 2008). It has promoted greater freedom for men and at the same time, legitimised unequal power relations and subordination of women. Many catholic believers, both men and women, consider that a woman's first duty is to be a helpmate to her husband, regardless of his behaviour (Anane, 1999). Although catholic scriptures also assert the need for mutual respect between the sexes, there is often a discrepancy between scriptural teachings on relations between the sexes and the way that many people, particularly men, interpret those teachings.

Focus-group participants in Sternberg's study with Nicaraguan adolescent boys were asked about the qualities of the ideal female partner. The consensus was that:

"She has a beautiful body, but more importantly, that she is a cook and household manager, who is willing and able to serve her man faithfully and be a good mother to his children" (Sternberg, 2000:93).

Claudio Stern *et al.* (2001) synthesized the feminine stereotype in the Mexican low and middle class social context with a common sense maxim: "It is not enough to be (chaste), one also has to appear to be (chaste)" (2001:12). This maxim is directly linked with the respectability of the young girl, who has to affirm it and confirm it publicly. Therefore "to be a woman is not directly associated with certain practices, qualities or other aspects strictly imputable to

'the feminine', but with the fact of building and maintaining an image for the eyes of others, in order to be able to get married, have children and form a respectable family." (2001:12). Based on his study, Stern *et al.* (2001) states Mexican teenagers reach respectability through the acceptance of controls and prohibitions such as; not to leaving the house without permission, maintaining a certain distance with neighbours, avoiding interacting with young girls of a doubtful reputation, abstaining from relating to males except in socially accepted places and under family supervision, not changing boyfriends frequently and not using coarse or vulgar language. When considering courtship, an adolescent girl is not supposed to take the initiative in her relationship with partners, but is expected to make herself "desirable" but not to experience desire (Tolman, 2002). These behaviours allow her to confirm before her own family and society, the quality of being a respectable girl, who is worthy for a young man to get emotionally involved with.

However, some teenage girls resist "emphasized femininity" (Connell, 1987) either wholly or partially (Deirdre *et al.* 2005), this is to say, the form of femininity "oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men" (Connell, 1987:183). It is important to remember that "emphasized femininity" is organized around compliance with gender inequality and exaggerates gender differences as a strategy of "adaptation to men's power", stressing empathy and nurturance (Kimmel, 2008:4). There are teenage girls and women whose feminine identity could be constructed in a struggle between traditional models - the asexual woman, romantic, dreamer, sentimental, tender, affectionate, sweet and with maternal instincts - and developing ones - the young assertive, self-assured girl, with future plans and projects (Basow and Rubin, 1999; Hurtado, 1996). However, one wonders if these developing struggles or "more sustained and multiple ruptures" (Ringrose, 2008) are real or still appear to occur, as Renold and Ringrose (2008) have found, mainly within narratives of fantasy.

Nonetheless, what is noteworthy is the fact that these young girls are negotiating in and around culturally rooted notions of femininity well into adolescence, by creating new ones to satisfy their own and others' expectations

about what it means to be a woman (Tolman, 2002; Currie *et al.* 2007; Deirdre *et al.* 2005; Denner and Dunbar, 2004). They are also forging spaces to speak their minds and to participate in traditionally masculine activities, despite the disapproval of others (Carr, 1998; Pastor *et al.* 1996). As Hurtado (1996) pointed out from his study:

“Chicanas' apparent 'passivity' is much more complex than it appears and may, in fact, disguise a tremendous amount of strength and will” (1996:71).

The different studies included in this section, show how conceptions of masculinities and femininities are negotiated and transformed over time, even as they hold on to significant continuities. As Currie has noted, the contradictions often found in teenager’s discourses “draw attention to the way that positioning is a dynamic process of negotiating multiple (but limited) subject positions that have been made available to girls today” (Currie *et al.* 2007:388). Especially when speaking about femininity, these studies also challenge the idea of relational theories (Brown and Gilligan, 1993) which state that female development necessarily entails a process of socialization that results in a loss of voice, a lack of power and an intensification of traditional gender roles, in order to remain connected to others by minimizing conflict in their relationship. They show there are teenage girls who are negotiating traditional gender expectations across contexts and cultures. These teens are finding ways of confronting, manipulating and even sometimes altering existing patriarchal arrangements (Stern S., 1995; Levinson, 1996).

As the next section will show, there are many girls and boys who do not conform to the ideal types of femininity and masculinity (Shain, 2003), as Paechter mentions “because their personal circumstances prevent this or because they actively construct oppositional femininities [and masculinities], openly declaring and defending their difference” (Paechter, 2006: 371). Unfortunately “others get fixed by the representations of more powerful others (Lico and Lutrell, 2011:681).

Despite their intention to challenge the culturally rooted notions of femininity, teenagers' lack opportunities in later life, their lack of support from society, government and institutions (mainly schools) and their financial background, become important impediments that make the cost of early childbearing not that great nor the benefits of delaying it that big. In addition, many of these adolescents who are struggling against traditional gender role expectations and dominant discourses, consider that motherhood is an important part of their lives or, at least, as important as education or employment (Phoenix, 1992; Alldred and David, 2007).

#### **2.4. - Conclusion**

As Alldred and David (2007) state: "Young people do not just *learn* about gender and sexuality as 'out there' in the social world, but the meanings and values they have access to are those through which they *produce themselves*. Their expectations, aspirations, desires and their sense of self are formed through constructions, including classroom and peer group vogues, regarding sexual attractiveness and desirable masculinities and femininities" (2007:187).

Discourses, although they may shift, set up what it is possible for teens to say and do. This research considers the important influence of teenagers' up-take of dominant views on gender, masculinity and femininity in the production of sexual attitudes, beliefs and practices, but also shows how young men and women are starting to consider that gender dominant discourses that have guided their behaviour are socially and historically constructed and therefore should not be interpreted and rationalized as the natural biological order. As Weedon states, "Everyday life is the site of the discursive redefinition of patriarchal meanings and values, and of resistance to them (Weedon, 2004:18).

## CHAPTER III. - INFLUENCES OF GENDER AND CULTURE IN CONCEPTIONS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

### 3.1. - Introduction

The information presented in this chapter intends to show how women's lives are governed largely by tradition and custom, which throughout different societies, in varying degrees, value women for their power of reproduction and as objects of sexual satisfaction.

Many of the studies reviewed in this chapter, involve women and not teenage girls, due to the lack of work done specifically with adolescents. However, it is important to say that research on the sexuality of Mexican youth, shows the importance of family on the gender socialization process and the sexuality of individuals. Parents play an important role in sexual scripts socialized for their children and as gender role models for sexual behaviour and attitudes (Witt, 1997; McHale *et al.* 2003). Therefore, although the research included, does not always involve teenagers, it is very relevant to the understanding of the adolescents' views and behaviour.

Different studies have shown that many women around the world, and specifically in patriarchal societies, share the common ideology of motherhood as women's greatest fulfilment, a rite of passage, an avenue to find approval from others and gain some kind of social authority (Mumtaz and Rauf, 1997, Nakano Glen, 1994; Petchesky, 1998; Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998). In addition to this, it is important to understand, especially for the purpose of this work, that many women and teenage girls can see in having a child a social and personal fulfilment (Duncan, 2007). Motherhood represents for many, a normative, valued and respected life choice (Yardley, 2008, Atkin and Givaudan, 1989; Stern, 2002, Phoenix & Woollet, 1991).

It continues by presenting the factors that create within the adolescents' relationship, a situation of unequal power and reduce young men's - but

especially young women's- ability to negotiate whether intercourse will take place and whether contraceptives will be used.

### **3.2. - Is teenage pregnancy “the problem”?**

For almost five decades a concern about teenage pregnancy has been present, since a number of truth-claims underpinning this concern were already being articulated in the 1960s (Koffman, 2012). With the emergence of adolescent pregnancy as a public problem in the 1970s came a major expansion of academic research on social and economic, as well as biomedical consequences of early childbearing (Román *et al.* 2001; NAS, 1996 in Zabin and Kiragu, 1998; Bongaarts, 1987 in Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, 1989). The construction of adolescent pregnancy as a medical problem emphasize that as a result of teenagers' physiological immaturity and their lack of adequate prenatal care, health risks associated with their pregnancies and childbearing are more pronounced than are those among older women (US Department of Commerce, 1996; NAS, 1996; UN, 1989; Liskin *et al.* 1985; Chike-Obi, 1993 in Zabin & Kiragu, 1998). Likewise, the suggestion that teenagers are psychologically immature, that they may be unable to parent adequately, and that this will have a lasting impact on their health and that of their children, has also been mentioned (MacCormack, 2004). More and more studies have showed that age is not the main cause of health consequences to teenage mothers. However as Koffman states: "Being a teenager is not a subjectivity that one could alter at will. No amount of responsible behaviour would disprove the proposition that a young person is emotionally immature and therefore ill-equipped to parent. As a result, teenage motherhood and fatherhood are rendered inherently problematic. (Koffman, 2012:129).

A key point is the fact that it is difficult to definitively establish the relationship between young maternal age and maternal death and/or infant mortality. What is most certain is the intimate relationship with the status of women in society and social factors such as lack of medical technologies to threat obstetric

complications -which is costly and therefore scarce or non-existent mainly in developing countries-, lack of prenatal-care, poverty and poor education (Freedman & Maine, 1993). As Irving states:

"In the case of adolescent sexuality, the medical discourse fails to address the complicated historical, political, social, and economic influences that have infused teenage sex with a particular set of meanings. In the medical model, adolescent sexuality is a discrete biological event rather than an amorphous web of social relations. The discursive focus is on behavioural rates rather than an elaboration of the cultural logics of adolescent sexuality" (Irvine, 1994:3).

In addition to the medical problematization of teenage pregnancy, there is a powerful strain in some countries toward locating the sources of social conflict and social change in the failings of individuals rather than in the inadequacies of social institutions. Teenage pregnancy has been framed as personal problems and its solutions have been couched in terms of alterations in individual behaviour. The dominant interpretation of parallel negative associations between early childbearing and educational/occupational attainment has been to attribute low levels of achievement among early child bearers directly to the facts of ill-timed pregnancy and birth (Card and Wise, 1978; Moore *et al.*, 1978; Haggstrom *et al.*, 1986; Hofferth, *et al.*, 1987). Recently however, this interpretation has been challenged by a number of scholars who have found that many teen mothers repeated grades early in their school careers or dropped out before becoming pregnant (Stern, 1995). Likewise, as Pillow (2006) argues, there are different discursive themes – discourses of contamination and responsibility and of pregnancy as a disease- that organize a discursive climate affecting the arrangements to provide education for pregnant and mothering students. Schools, she adds, “continue to engage in discourses and practices that let the teen mother know she does not fit in the regular public school” (2006:69). Alldred and David (2007) also found that most of the young mothers they interviewed had bad experiences at school. “They shared a strong sense that they were not respected at school by either their peers or teachers” (2007:128). These barriers are likely to be the reason that pregnancy is the most often mentioned cause expressed by teenage girls who drop out of

school and why most young mothers do not complete high school (Pillow, 2006).

As a result, low schooling expectations can show that in certain family context to get married and become a mother can have a greater value than studying. Therefore the low academic expectations can probably reflect a generic identity based on motherhood, and on the scanty opportunities of growth for many women who live in situations where poverty prevails (Alatorre and Atkins, in Schmukler, 1998).

Low schooling expectations may also show that many adolescent girls become pregnant because they perceive few opportunities in later life and have little support from institutions. As a result, to get married and become a mother for these teenagers, has a greater value than studying (Alatorre and Atkin in Schmukler, 1998; Stern, 1995). Most women who became mothers before they were twenty in Phoenix's study (1992:292) had neither been academically inclined nor in jobs which offered training or career prospects. In addition, the majority of them considered that motherhood was at least as important a career as (and for some, more important than) employment. As a result they did not appear to have their employment or educational prospects damaged by early childbearing.

Another argument against teenage pregnancy is its contribution to the perpetuation of poverty. Studies have shown that, a lack of education, supposedly caused by an early pregnancy, leads to a deficiency in vocational skills, which in turn affects employment opportunities and result in a greater risk of poverty and economic dependence among teenagers (Furstenberg *et al.* 1987; Champion, 1995; France, 2008; Phoenix and Woollet, 1991; Alatorre and Atkin, 1998). However, the majority of teen child bearers both in Mexico and other countries are poor to begin with (CONAPO, 1996; Freedman and Maine, 1993; WHO, 1991 in UN, 1995). As Claudio Stern (1995) explains:

"The fact that early pregnancy is frequently associated with poverty does not imply that it is a phenomenon that produces such situation nor that, by itself, perpetuates it. If anything the context of poverty and the lack of opportunities should be underlined as the "causes" of early pregnancies and its negative consequences in our country and not vice versa" (1995: 5-6).

In many countries a pregnancy can be perceived by young women who lack educational and employment opportunities- even outside marriage- as a way of achieving adult social status and a clearly valued role in the community (Hawkins and Meshesha, 1994; Stern, 1995; Furstenberg Jr., 1998; Alatorre and Atkin, 1998; De Oliveira, 1998; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Phoenix, 1992; Yardley, 2008). Therefore, while some authors have suggested that the reproductive capacity of teenagers and older women is the cause of their oppression, others perceive it as an element that empowers those who are poor; that is to say, it opens to them a wider range of possibilities of liberation.

Finally, the problem of adolescent pregnancy has not only been defined in terms of maternal-infant morbidity and mortality, of the impact of early childbearing on women's future alternatives -like lack of education, limited job opportunities and/or dependency on public assistance for long periods of time- or in terms of traditions or subcultural attitudes, values, and norms, but in terms of their present moral status.

Both at the turn of the century and in 1970s, a groundbreaking amount of information about the sexuality of unmarried young women emerged, causing sexually unorthodox behaviour to acquire an important level of visibility. This increased visibility disturbed the established moral boundaries between deviant and respectable sexuality (Cohen, 1985). Teenage pregnancy has been seen as a product of sexual permissiveness through the subsidization of family planning services and of single parenthood. The reproductive health-care services available are considered to be counterproductive since they legitimate sexual activity and are irrelevant to solve the real causes of adolescent pregnancy. On the other hand the meaning of early fertility has changed because it is no longer always associated with marriage.

In her book *Dangerous Passage* Nathanson talks about how the increased visibility of sexually unorthodox behaviour of young women accounts for "the continued resonance of young women's nonmarital sexuality as a sign and symbol of social disorder and social change" since "it threaten the "natural" hierarchy of gender on which the stability of the social order was seen to depend" (Nathanson, 1991:215-216). She believes that the sexuality of adolescent women violates the hierarchy of genders. It becomes a challenge of single young women's sexuality to patriarchal and gender-based definitions of the female role.

"In patriarchal systems of gender stratification, sexual autonomy is the prerogative not simply of adults but of males. Young women are expected to preserve their sexuality to be bargained in exchange for a man's social protection and economic support-support for themselves and for their children. The sexually unorthodox girl threatens not just her own future, but an entire system of social and economic relationships based on the assumption that each individual woman and her children will be supported by an individual man. And it is in these structurally disruptive possibilities that the danger of young women's transition to adulthood most particularly lie" (Nathanson, 1991:208).

In their account of the emergence of teenage pregnancy in the USA, Arney and Bergen identify a shift from a 'moral' to a 'scientific' problematization of out-of-wedlock childbearing by young women. They proposed that the 'moral' problematization was characterized by the exercise of punitive and exclusionary power, while the 'scientific' problematization signalled the rise of a normalizing and corrective form of power (Arney and Bergen, 1984 in Koffman, 2012:129). Considering the above information, there is a strong need to consider the chain of events, situations and circumstances that makes researchers, policy makers and government reconsider the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy.

### **3.3. - Value of marriage and motherhood within teenagers' lives**

The patriarchal model of the family consisting of a married man, a woman and their children, influences many societies, occupying a central place in women's lives, who in turn, transmit their views and beliefs to their children. The family is

the place where girls first assimilate the norms and values of society. As such, it is the framework within which, the potential for and limitations on women's self-realisation are determined (Geldstein and Pantelides, 1997). As Thomson *et al.* (2008) have found in their study *The Making of Modern Motherhood Project*<sup>10</sup> "whatever their age, women tended to talk about an imagined sense of themselves as mothers, formed in mid childhood" and "birth tended to be a collective affair involving mothers and friends as well as partners." (Thomson *et al.* 2008:7).

There are social contexts, mainly among working lower and middle classes, where it is not socially allowed for a teenager to live alone or with people who are not family. Her social belonging depends of her status as daughter or wife. Those are contexts in which a woman without a husband is devalued, where female mobility is limited to family spaces and where the remunerated work possibilities are scarce or non-existent. In those contexts, the importance of having and maintaining a marital relationship (or a free union relationship in many cases) is important (Rodríguez *et al.* 1995; Zalduondo and Bernard, 1994).

Marriage, in patriarchal societies, determines a woman's future and defines her role within the family and society at large. In different findings, teenage girls and women have agreed that, even when a woman works and is economically independent, she is eventually fated to enter marriage and therefore motherhood (Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998; Giachello, 1994; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Stern, 2002). For many young women, to marry is to obtain security and an identity, as shows the woman's use of her husband's surname upon marriage in Mexico.

Motherhood, as marriage, becomes an important pre-requisite to achieve adulthood and especially to prove womanhood. García and De Oliveira

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<sup>10</sup> Project which builds on existing qualitative investigations of the process of becoming a mother (Bailey 1999, Miller 2005), and negotiations of changing opportunities and circumstances over generations (Brannen *et al.* 2004, Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg 2000). The study explores how contemporary motherhood is a site of solidarity and division between women (Thomson *et al.* 2008:4)

collected answers, such as the one below, when trying to understand the meaning of motherhood in Mexico:

“How would I know if I am really a woman? Or how would a man know he is a man if he does not have a child? If I haven’t had a child, it is because I am not a woman; I haven’t fulfilled myself as a woman. That’s what I think. And for the man, I imagine it is the same (Angeles, 42 years old, two children, lives in the D.F)” (García and De Oliveira, 1994:188).

According to the normative ideal, especially low and middle-class Mexican girls, have been raised to believe that they can only encounter fulfilment in womanhood as wives and mothers (McGinn, 1966; Yardley, 2008). For many Mexican women motherhood is rarely questioned as the main meaning of life (García and De Oliveira 1994; Alonso, 1995). It is important to admit that parenting is an extremely gendered and gendering experience regardless of today’s gender-neutral discourses of parenthood, childcare and earning (David *et al.* 1993; Alldred, 1999).

Through marriage and parenthood young men, and especially young women, gain a space and privileges that otherwise would be denied to them. For many adolescent girls, it is during this stage of their lives that their sense of identity as autonomous individuals is strongest (Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; De Oliveira, 1998). Motherhood becomes for them a validating experience.

Likewise different studies suggest that women’s sense of reproductive and sexual entitlement is strongly mediated through motherhood (Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998, Seif El Dawla *et al.* 1998). Women, in the unequal situations they experience every day, can use their ability to bear children as a strategy to bargain with their spouses in order to improve their position. Likewise, at some point, there are women who- through motherhood- feel more entitled to speak their own mind, assert their views and needs regarding contraception, seek sources of personal satisfaction outside the home or relax enough to just enjoy sex. Their role as mothers grants them decision-making power, a means by which they authorise themselves to fight for the satisfaction of needs that are otherwise not acknowledged (Grilo Diniz *et al.* 1998; Osakue and Martin-Hilber, 1998; Petchesky, 1998; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000).

### 3.3.1. - Value of a child within men and women's lives

Children in different patriarchal cultures, are very important not only because of the power they give but because they often represent a home for many young and older women. Children give them a feeling to have someone to live for, make them feel loved and understood, give them a feeling of being needed and guarantee that they will not be alone the rest of their life (Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998). Children can even become the reward for an unsatisfactory marital relationship (García & De Oliveira, 1994; Rodríguez *et al.* 1995; Zalduondo and Bernard, 1994).

Fertility is not only important to the woman but to the man as well. Depending on the culture and circumstances of the family in which they grow up, children provide proof of a man's virility and perpetuate the family name (Unger and Molina, 1999; Sternberg, 2000; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000). They are a source of pleasure, pride, prestige, status and security. They are central to lineage prestige and to lineage calculations of inheritance (Mamdani, 1972; Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998).

Considering the above, it is not surprising to find that there are societies in which, the behaviour of the community towards women who are childless, is not sympathetic (Unisa, 1999; Pearce, 1999). Studies have found that, individuals who are not able to have children, are not respected as responsible adults and may be isolated in different societies. Women, not surprisingly, seem to carry the greatest burden since male infertility is acknowledged but is viewed as less of a problem (Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998; Pearce, 1999; Wiredu, 1992; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000). In Argentina, for instance, Geldstein and Pantelides (1997) found that while only 20 per cent of adolescent girls in upper-middle class subscribed to the idea that a woman without children is not a complete woman, almost half of the girls from the lower class did.

Motherhood is highly priced especially if the offspring is a male. Son preference exists primarily in societies characterised by gender inequalities and low female status. In these societies, an avenue for women to increase their status and gain greater respect is by bearing sons (Dube, 1997; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Rojas and Figueroa, 2005; Rojas Martínez, 2006). This preference for boys vis-à-vis girls has often different motives, one of them being an economic rational. To put it simply, boys represent a net asset to parents; they can work in the fields or for wages and they will provide for parents in their old age (Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998; García and De Oliveira, 1994).

By contrast, girls are often considered a net drain on family resources. They have limited prospects for earning a substantial income; they are likely to marry early and at high cost because of the dowry that must be paid and the benefit of their work will benefit their husbands' families. While boys earn money, girls have to be supported until marriage and maybe even afterwards if the marriage is unsuccessful. Girls need dowries while sons are like the supporting pillars of the house (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Sternberg, 2000).

In Sternberg's study (2000) with Nicaraguan men, daughters are regarded as less valuable than sons. A daughter is not valueless, but it appears that her value lies in her ability to serve her family, and not in her as a human being; "When I realised that God had given me a girl, I said to myself; at least I have a cook to make me tortillas." (Male participant, Sternberg, 2000:96).

Although the beliefs mentioned above are very common and predominate in patriarchal societies, it is worthwhile mentioning that they don't happen in all the families to the same degree. Likewise, there are women who acknowledge that their daughters are more supportive, loving and caring than their sons and, that their husband and in-laws support them when given birth to a girl.

The information present up to this point, explains how teenagers' lives are strongly influenced by tradition, dominant discourses and gender expectations that limit their options and direct them towards marriage and motherhood, as

valid options to gain status, respect and fulfilment in their lives. However, as the following section will show, there are additional cultural norms regarding appropriate sexual behaviour and knowledge, as well as different meanings attached to sexuality and to gender identity, that become barriers that mainly teenage girls have to exceed in order to become more assertive in their sexual encounters, more participative in the negotiation and decision-making about contraception and therefore, be in a better position to intervene successfully in reducing their unwanted sexual encounters and/or unplanned pregnancies.

### **3.4. - Influence of cultural expectations in sexuality**

As mentioned previously, in every society men and women's general behaviour is determined, at least in part, by widely held perceptions as to how they should behave. Sexuality is not an area, which is free of such expectations. While there are differences between cultures in the forms of sexual behaviour considered appropriate for men and women, there are nevertheless many similarities (Holland *et al.* 1998; Petchesky, 1998).

Social and cultural processes not only define what men and women are, but what sort of relationships should develop between them. Various cultures interpret, define, and regulate sexuality differently, and cultural group members socialise their children to cultural norms, taboos and expectations regarding sexual behaviour. Societies often have strict norms that affect expressions of sexuality; most of them for example, impose serious limitations on the degree to which younger people may express openly their sexual intentions, desires, preferences, including age and circumstances in which adolescents can enter into sexual relations (Mundigo, 1995; Ortiz and Ortega, 1998; Paiva, 1996; Tolman, 2002). Not surprisingly, women, once more, are those who are more constrained by cultural norms, which determine what is and what is not appropriate sexual behaviour for them.

### 3.4.1. - Teenage girls' sexual socialization and expectations

For many women, especially from developing countries, expectations in the area of sexuality are completely different from those of men. Most young women in Mexico, as well as in other countries, are constantly aware of the value of their sexual reputations (Amuchástegui, 2001; Tolman, 2007). A young and inexperienced woman can be often expected to be pure, chaste and easily malleable (Petchesky, 1998). In Mexico, as in most Latin American countries, virginity is often still a fundamental condition to women's social status and a high value is placed on it before marriage. Many teenage girls face tremendous social pressure to maintain an image of virginity and innocence regardless of the true extent of their knowledge or sexual experience.

“The image of the Virgin Mary has provided one important source of imagery for a ‘natural’ femininity, consisting of sexual purity, spiritual virtue, and the sacredness of motherhood” (Alonso, 1995:85).

Those adolescent girls, who have sex before marriage may not be respected, may be perceived as “easy women” and may have difficulty in finding a husband (Amuchástegui, 1999; Medrano, 1994, Szasz, 1998a). In his focus groups with all male Nicaraguan participants, Sternberg (2000) found that men spoke of female sexuality in terms of beauty and passivity. His participants stated that ‘honest’ women should not have opinions on what they want in sex: it is up to the man to know how to please them. Therefore any discourse or practice, which legitimates woman's sexual pleasure, acknowledges her sexual knowledge, values her performance or places it under her control, is potentially threatening to the man's masculinity and categorises her as “debased” or “slut”. Amuchástegui (2001) and Szasz (1998a) described how sexual agency is downplayed for young women in social groups- especially from middle low and low classes in Mexico- that assume a bipolar representation of female sexuality; the virgin and the whore. The first- the virgin- represents the good woman who is not a subject of sexual desire except when her goal is reproduction and motherhood. It is the young woman with whom men would establish family ties,

described as tender, understanding, calm, serious, who would restrain male impulses and who deserves protection, commitment and respect. The whore or “puta” is the teenage girl or woman with whom men only want sex, described as promiscuous and untrustworthy. This is the young woman who incites men to engage in sexual activity, who take the initiative and express desires and impulses. It refers to a female adolescent who can exert sexual power on men. They are not to marry or have children with. It is in their encounters with these sexually desirable adolescents, as Szasz (1998b) mentions, that young men confirm the strength of their sexual desires and potency. They consider these teenage girls, sexual objects for pleasure and they brag about them to their peers.

However, Claudio Stern found in his focus groups that it is possible to see contradictory behaviours in many teenage girls he interviewed: while they express favourable attitudes towards pre-marital sex, they only legitimate intercourse before marriage through the discourse of love. Likewise, in some cases “they resort to the argument of drunkenness as the cause of an unimputable sexual encounter where they literally lost their head –an argument comparable to the discourse of love” (Stern *et al.* 2001:17).

Even once married, many Mexican and *Latino* female teenagers and women are expected to be ignorant of sexual matters, passive, loyal, care for their husbands, obey them, have intercourse whenever they wish and without condoms if they insist. They too may have to accept their partners’ infidelities and risk violence if they object (Medrano, 1994; Radhakrishma, 1997; De Oliveira 1998; Aliro and Ochieng, 1999; Amuchástegui, 1999;).

Therefore, as Blank (2008) states, “Virginity’s malleable vagueness [is] the key to its effectiveness as a tool of misogynist control and terrorism, the thing that had for centuries let virginity be used as both carrot and stick- and meant that no woman, however sexually untouched she might be, could ever be entirely safe from the threat of sexual misconduct” (2008:295).

Talking about infidelities, it is important to highlight that in countries such as Mexico, another cultural expectation of femininity is for women to remain faithful to their husbands and to be steady partners. Unfaithful women are considered 'bad' women and moreover, a woman's infidelity is not only a reflection of her wickedness but also of her husband's failure to be enough of a man, sexually speaking, for her. Their wives or girl friends' feelings of love and fidelity reaffirm their masculine identity (Szasz, 1998a; Aliro and Ochieng, 1999; Sternberg, 2000).

Sadly, the cultural constructions of chastity and purity as ideals of femininity mean that some women struggle to consider themselves as sexual beings. Studies have shown that, it is not only the fear of losing their reputation or engaging in a conflicting situation that prevents Latin-American women from having a more active role during intercourse, but that they do not see themselves as subjects of their own sexuality, rather they see themselves as having to protect their bodies from men (De la Vega, 1990; Medrano, 1994; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998). In addition to this, Stern found teenagers who used the expression "the man gets as far as the woman allows" underline a central idea which confronts adolescents and older women with a double task: on the one hand, "to keep at bay the 'naturally' uncontrollable sexuality of males" and on the other, "to control their own sexuality in order to be publicly recognized as a respectable girl" (Stern *et al.* 2001:9). As Tolman states: "We have effectively desexualized girls' sexuality substituting the desire for relationship and emotional connection for sexual feelings in their bodies" (2007:5).

#### **3.4.2. - Teenage boys' sexual socialization and expectations**

Mexican teenage boys, on the other hand, are expected to be physically and emotionally strong and to take risks. As a result of family, social, and peer influences, sexual experience is seen as a desired goal for them and linked to their developing concept of masculinity. The more frequently they have intercourse and the more partners they have, the more of a man they become.

Stern *et al.* (2003) found that peers put a lot of pressure on sexual initiation of youth and, those who do not want to follow this pattern, are characterized as homosexual (*maricones*). Young men's relevance at a sexual relation is related to his role as the teenage girls initiator in sexual life, the person from whom a young woman learns what sexuality is. The emphasis on the male figure as the provider of information and experience is accentuated and internalized (Geldstein and Pantelides, 1997; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Amuchástegui, 1998a- 2001; Szasz, 1998b).

In Latin America- where prevailing mores exhort men to have sex before marriage- cases have been reported of fathers who take their newly pubescent male relatives to prostitutes against their will or without any prior discussion with them about basic sexuality, in order to initiate them into sexual experience and reinforce heterosexual gender roles (De la Vega, 1990; Hawkins, 1991 in Hawkins & Meshesha, 1994; Gutman and Caceres in Foreman, 1999). From their older male relatives, Latino adolescents learn to view women as objects of potential conquest and are implicitly encouraged to have multiple sexual relationships (Medrano, 1994).

Different studies found a shared belief that a man's need for sex is beyond his control (Sternberg, 2000; Szasz, 1998b; Paiva, 1996). The studies suggest there is a discourse of sexual arousal based on strong, painfully intense physical impulses that require immediate relief, and they report a kind of surrender to these sensations, urges and feelings. Likewise, an important theme in Sternberg's research discussions about sexuality with Nicaraguan men was the belief that male sexuality is governed by instinct, and that it is something 'wild', which men need to make an effort to control. Male participants expressed pride in their stereotypical image as sexually voracious conquerors of women and therefore 'real men'. The following quote shows how what is important for a *macho* man is to have sex with a woman (in the quote referred as "meat") regardless of her being pretty or not, respectable or not, old or young.

“Men, because they want to be machos say that ‘whatever goes into the broiler is meat’”(Sternberg, 2000:93).

As mentioned previously, faithfulness is another aspect that is very differently perceived among men and women. For many teenage boys, to have more than one partner, far from proving that the man has been unfaithful, often becomes an important expression of his virility. Latino men are considered unfaithful by nature; it is not only their right to have more than one partner but also an expression of their sexuality (Sternberg, 2000). Likewise, many Mexican men do not consider themselves unfaithful when no emotions are involved in their sexual relations (Szasz, 1998a), a perception that would never be valid for women. According to gender norms in the sub-culture that Paiva studied with Brazilian students, aged from 14 to 21 in Sao Paulo, young men, unlike young women, are not expected to be able to decide and choose before the sexual encounter. To think and to choose is something for the future. Their first task is to be “assertive and conquer”. Their choice comes after pregnancy occurs: accepting responsibility/paternity or not (Paiva, 1996).

However, Stycos believes that the often-found image of men as sexually voracious, careless, and irresponsible is not always borne out of reality. Although there are men who would conform to this stereotype, this author-citing his own research carried out in Puerto Rico- stresses that the men he interviewed were far from the “sex-crazed males anxious to demonstrate their fertility” he had been led to expect. What he found instead, was that expectations and norms of male and female behaviour made communication between the couple very complicated, especially on matters related to sex and sexuality, (Stycos, 1996:2). In general, it is the pressure to conform to a rigid masculinity that is perceived as threatening for men. Freer expression of women’s desires is seen as freeing men of the pain of rejection, enabling them to avoid peer group competition and giving them access to more emotionally rewarding relationships (Castro and Miranda, 1998; Bronfman and Minello, 1995).

### **3.4.3. - Gender differences towards sexuality and sexual experience**

Gender, as the following section will show, not only determines how young men and women sexually behave but how they experience intercourse differently and give different meaning to it. Young people's account of their sexual practice in different studies made it clear that the same sexual attitudes, desires and behaviours by men and by women have different meanings. In addition to this, cultural expectations have even determined in many cases who enjoys sex and who can and who cannot make their sexual desire explicit.

Beside the general acceptance among young men of first intercourse as a positive step to manhood, their accounts of first intercourse are predominantly positive. Holland's study (1998), as mentioned previously, shows a marked sense of agency in the young men's reflections on their performance and their accounts are more embodied than those of the adolescent girls.

The studies reviewed in this work describe basically two ways of expression of the meaning of sexuality, which are tied to the reaffirmation of masculinity: the excessive importance attributed to the erection and penetration, as the only valuable ways of sexual expression among young men and, the accounts among the peer group or masculine spaces aggrandizing their knowledge about sexual matters and their experiences with penetrations (Díaz, 1997; Liendro, 1993; Szasz, 1998b). Szasz examined studies on the meaning of sexuality and masculine identity among Mexican men of different ages, both rural and urban, including migrant, working class and middle class men. She found that demonstrations of sexual performance play a central role in the affirmation of masculine identity; having an erection and achieving penetration were considered the most valuable forms of male sexual expression.

“Mexican men learn that being a man is associated with valued characteristics such as strength, protectiveness, courage, assertiveness and a sense of power. On the other hand, a man is not considered a man if he has not proved himself. Sexual prowess is seen as an important way of proving masculinity, especially if a man lacks economic resources” (Szasz, 1998a: 98).

However, these experiences are also challenging and embodiment is explicit in the anxiety, apprehension or nervousness related to concerns about the adequacy of their own performance (Szasz, 1998b; Holland *et al.* 1998). As Holland found, “freer expression of women’s desires is seen as freeing men of the pain of rejection, enabling them to escape peer group competition for sexual conquest, and giving them access to closer, emotionally rewarding relationships (Holland *et al.* 2004:162-3).

“First intercourse for young men is a challenge that can threaten their successful achievement of manhood. It is their potency, which is at stake, they do not necessarily know what to do with their bodies, and there is a good deal of concern about doing it right. But in these positive accounts, the main point is to do it-it is a masculine performance in which they are the star player” (Holland *et al.* 1998:180).

For teenage girls, however, the meanings involved in intercourse can be very different. Studies have shown that what is important for women’s sense of adult femininity is the social relationship with a man (Holland *et al.* 1998; Miller, 1986; Szasz, 1998a, Tolman, 2002). In these researches, many young women express the view of a sexual encounter, as one in which woman’s fulfilment is gained through the relationship and in giving men pleasure. Only secondarily, is women’s fulfilment gained through their own bodily desires or in communicating about shared pleasure with their partner. Sexual pleasure, for one of the teenager girls Tolman interviewed, meant “the pleasure of ‘being wanted’ and ‘show[ing] him that I love him more, in a physical way” (Tolman, 2002:2). Likewise in Mexican contexts- in which it is important for a woman to have a husband in order to be valued- maintaining a marital relationship relegates her desires and personal preferences, while she leaves as a prerogative, her ability to sexually satisfy her partner (Rodríguez *et al.* 1995; Zalduondo and Bernard, 1994).

When considering sexual experience studies have shown how from early in their lives, many Mexican and Latino teenager girls experience clearly split demands around sexuality and sexual performance. As mentioned previously,

they are expected to be virgin and naive, yet seductive. Their sexuality is in a sense, owned by the male figures in their family since their virginity is a sign of the family honour (De la Vega, 1990). Likewise once in a relationship, femininity “is defined *by masculinity through* the heterosexual contract” (Holland *et al.* 2004:157). While often men’s accounts do communicate clear expectations that sex will be pleasurable, women’s narratives describe sexual intercourse as having specific risks and therefore, it is not often a pleasant experience. One Brazilian survey of first sexual experience found that pain, love and fear were reported by more than 70 percent of female teens, while pleasure was the overwhelming feeling among male teens. Guilty feelings, anxiety over risking a pregnancy and fears of the social consequences of losing one’s virginity are some of the feelings at the root of the uneasiness felt by female teens (Author unknown, 1992 in Foreman, 1999).

A greater participation of women in the decisions about their bodies and their sexual life, conjugal and reproductive, and a greater male acceptance of women’s participation in those decisions has also been documented (Figuerola and Liendo, 1994; Leñero, 1994). Therefore, within the construction of masculinity, young women seem to be finding ways, as Holland hoped “of existing and making sense of themselves and their ‘otherness’” (Holland, 2004:164). The agency and resistance in a greater number of young people’s ability for constructing their own sexual identities and questioning the boundaries of masculinity and femininity in their intimate relationships, show that the double standard identified in previous studies (Holland *et al.* 1998) is less active and influential than it used to be in.

Although there it still a long way to go, powerful young women are seem less socially contradictory because power is starting to be considered as a characteristic of more women now-a-days. In Holland’s terms, some young women who are resisting conventional femininity as well as some young men who are resisting masculinity, appear to have a ‘female-in-the-head’ as the basis of their identity. However, although some young women who can and do resist pressures on them to discipline their bodies into a docile femininity, still do

so “with reference to constructions of bodies, sex and gender in which male needs, male bodies, and male desires are dominant” (Holland *et al.* 2004:172).

#### **3.4.3.1. - The gendered meanings of sexual encounters**

Beside the general acceptance among young men of first intercourse as a positive step to manhood, their accounts of first intercourse are predominantly positive. Holland’s *et al.* study (1998) shows a marked sense of agency in the young men’s reflections on their performance and their accounts are more embodied than those of the adolescent girls. However, these experiences are also challenging and embodiment is explicit in the anxiety, apprehension or nervousness related to concerns about the adequacy of their own performance (Szasz, 1998b; Holland *et al.* 1998).

“First intercourse for young men is a challenge that can threaten their successful achievement of manhood. It is their potency, which is at stake, they do not necessarily know what to do with their bodies, and there is a good deal of concern about doing it right. But in these positive accounts, the main point is to do it-it is a masculine performance in which they are the star player” (Holland *et al.* 1998:180).

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Likewise in Mexican contexts- in which it is important for a woman to have a husband in order to be valued- maintaining a marital relationship relegates her desires and personal preferences, while she leaves as a prerogative, her ability to sexually satisfy her partner (Rodríguez *et al.* 1995; Zalduondo and Bernard, 1994).

#### **3.4.3.2. - Sexual Experience**

From early in their lives, many Mexican and Latino teenager girls experience clearly split demands around sexuality and sexual performance. As mentioned previously, they are expected to be virgin and naive, yet seductive. Their sexuality is, in a sense, owned by the male figures in their family since their virginity is a sign of the family honour (De la Vega, 1990).

While often men's accounts do communicate clear expectations that sex will be pleasurable, women's narratives describe sexual intercourse as having specific risks and therefore, it is not often a pleasant experience. One Brazilian survey of first sexual experience found that pain, love and fear were reported by more than 70 percent of female teens, while pleasure was the overwhelming feeling among male teens. Guilty feelings, anxiety over risking a pregnancy and fears of the social consequences of losing one's virginity are some of the feelings at the root of the uneasiness felt by female teens (Author unknown, 1992 in Foreman, 1999).

In Mexico and Latin America, *machismo* discourse dictates that it is the man who should experience pleasure during sex, the woman who does so, can be considered shameless or arouse suspicion in their husband that she has had experience with other men (Chávez, 1999). Medrano (1994) found that Latino married women are kept and protected from sexual pleasure and intellectual freedom so they could serve as "perfect" wives. Many of his participants stated that wives are not considered a sexual partner in marriage, for sex must be practiced in one way with the wife and in another with the lover. The wife is expected to provide pleasure to her partner but is not viewed as having sexual desires of her own. As Tolman (2007) explains, these constructions of a young woman's sexuality leave out "her sexual subjectivity" this is to say, "her experience of herself as a sexual being, who feels entitled to sexual pleasure and sexual safety, who makes active sexual choices and who has an identity as a sexual being" (Tolman, 2007: 5).

Nevertheless it is important to note that in the past years, different sociological studies have mentioned that the changes in the work market, the increased participation of women in the work area outside the home and the migrations, have modified the gender relations, the controls and meanings of sexuality and the sexual practices (De Oliveira *et al.* 1998; Bronfman and Minello, 1995; Bronfman and Rubin-Kurtzman, 1995; Szasz, 1998b; Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998). These changes show new forms of agency (Allen, 2003; Youdell 2005; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010) or rupture (Renold and Ringrose 2008) in young women's

narratives and practices, identifying young women's "systematised understandings of power" laying the foundations for "more sustained forms of agentic practice" (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010:341). In-depth studies suggest a significant recognition of sexual pleasure and eroticism among younger women and a better communication about sexuality with their partners (Amuchástegui, 1994-1999; Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Szasz, 1998a). A greater participation of women in the decisions about their bodies and their sexual life, conjugal and reproductive, and a greater male acceptance of women's participation in those decisions has also been documented (Figueroa and Liendro, 1994; Leñero, 1994).

### **3.5. - Cultural barriers to contraception**

Previous researches have illustrated that pressure in relation to sex and pregnancy for adolescents can come in a wide range of forms, as well as, from a number of sources. As the following information will show, teenagers can feel pressure due to dominant discourses of gendered sexuality; to expectations within the relationship with their partner, to judgements - perceived or real- of their sexual behaviour through a fear of not fitting in and due to coercion. These forms of pressure can be applied by the wider community, by the family, the peer group, a sexual partner or by the adolescents themselves (Maxwell and Chase, 2008; Wight *et al.* 2000; Fernández, 1994; Thomson 2000; Hirst 2004; Lee *et al.* 2004; Turner 2004; Tabberer *et al.* 2000).

#### **3.5.1. - Masculinity and use of contraception**

For many teenagers, the idea of a physiological imperative to have sex together with deeply rooted expectations placed on them to take risks and have frequent sexual intercourse, often with more than one partner, can lead many of them, to consider condoms as unmanly and as a barrier to affirming their virility. Likewise, their apprehensiveness of failing to perform sexually, their anxiety of losing control and their fear of being unfaithful threatens, especially young

boys' sense of sexuality, of themselves as masculine beings and their incipient adult status. Rodriguez *et al.* (1995) study shows, that young boys who have not yet had intercourse, express a fear about the size of their penis and the success to have an erection, as well as an anxiety to be able to have intercourse. Likewise, to be able to claim sexual experience, as Harvey (2012) found "involves being able to confidently use condoms as protection" (2012:141). Therefore the fear of social ridicule and the feeling of inadequacy while using a condom could be too much, as sociologists José Aguilar and Luis Botello state:

"Many young and older men reject condoms because in the middle of sexual conquest they can't put on a rubber without feeling ridiculous" (in Chávez, 1999:60).

This information is important since it has relevant implications for our understanding of the role of the body in "our social science accounts of people, identity and subjectivity" (Measor, 2006:400). As Measor also explains, condoms:

"... were seen as an enemy of the body, or more accurately of the body's ability to perform according to scripts of 'proper' masculine sexual behaviour" (2006:398).

When considering contraception, studies have also shown that in a patriarchal society, men are to be the decision makers and, a related anxiety-provoking issue for them, is the sense of a loss of control when their wives decide to use contraceptives without consulting them. In many societies women are believed to have no rights to make decisions by themselves, let alone make decisions about contraceptive use. Therefore, men are the ones who decide if the couple will use family planning methods and, if they do, they supply them (Renne, 1993; Bawah *et.al.* 1999). Nicaraguan men in Sternberg's study (2000) expressed the opinion that within a marriage or a stable relationship it is a man's right to decide when a woman should have children. Sternberg explained that this was never stated directly in the focus group or the workshop, but it was implicit in many of the comments about contraception. His

participants believed this to be true, because they were the ones who would be expected to provide for the children.

Following the same line of needing the partner's authorization to use birth control methods, Coggins *et al.* (2000) investigated the attitudes of urban and rural men towards potential vaginal microbicides in Mexico (City) and two other countries. They found that taxi drivers were in favour of the concept of a woman using a microbicide without her husband's consent for protection against infection, but not if the microbicide was also a contraceptive. The farmers, on the other hand, unanimously claimed that their wives would have to have their permission to use a microbicide, whether or not it was also contraceptive. This view was explained by the fact that they were the ones to make any decisions about family planning.

Another anxiety that men have about family planning is related to the possibility that women might act independently. Husbands think their control over their spouse would be weakened in the sexual and domestic arenas if women practiced contraception (Watkins *et al.* 1997; Sternberg, 2000). Many believe that family planning methods create the possibility that women could refuse to fulfil their reproductive and sexual obligations, that they could seek sexual satisfaction outside marriage and that they could abandon their families (Bankole and Singh, 1998; Bawah *et al.* 1999; Castle *et al.* 1999). Female sterilisation, for example, more than any other contraceptive method, made Nicaraguan teenagers in Sternberg's study, suspect that their partners wanted to have sex with other men.

“If she wants to get sterilised it's because she's crazy, she wants to cheat on her husband, she wants to have one man and then another”  
(Sternberg, 2000:95).

These anxieties of losing the partner seem similar to those described previously by young women, but their origins are quite different. Young women's fear of losing the relationship is due to their need for security, status achieved, financial support and social acceptance (Castle *et al.* 1999). Young men's anxiety, on

the other hand, reflects not only concern for the potential loss of a spouse or a partner but mainly, for the ridicule that this circumstance would be likely to entail. Women's promiscuity is believed to damage men's status, honour and pride (Sternberg, 2000; Bawah *et al.* 1999).

The negotiation of condom use involves complex dynamics between risk perception, commitment trust and love (Holland *et al.* 1990, 2004; Rosenthal *et al.* 1998; Willig, 1999). Therefore, condoms may have a symbolic role in the construction of certain kind of relationships (Harvey, 2012) as Holland *et al.* (1990) identify in the following statement: "if love is assumed to be the greatest prophylactic, then trust comes a closed second" (1990:125). In longer-term relationships, and especially within marriage, the implication of lack of trust and lack of respect for the female partner can make condoms unacceptable. Within these relationships, condoms can be associated with prostitution, extramarital affairs, lack of cleanliness, and sexual transmitted infections (Medrano, 1994; Holland *et al.* 1998; Feldman *et al.* 1997; Havanon *et al.* 1993; Grady *et al.* 1999). In Coggins' study (2000) taxi drivers and farmers from Mexico, as well as from two other countries, considered condoms unreliable and claimed that raising the issue of condom use would be seen as a sign of mistrust or infidelity. One Mexican taxi driver from this study stated:

"If my wife tells me to use a condom, she's planting the seeds of mistrust... using a condom undermines the trust that one has in one's partner' (Coggins *et al.* 2000:135).

Likewise, studies reviewed by Szasz (1998b) with Mexican working class men, suggest that the use of condoms may not take place in sexual relationships between young couples that have made an emotional commitment. This is so, because these methods are intended for use only in relationships with women who cannot be trusted. In a discussion group, Hawkins and Meshesha (1994) found that:

"Women do not want their partners to use condoms because they believe that men use condoms only with prostitutes" (Hawkins and Meshesha 1994: 45).

### **3.5.2. - Femininity and use of contraception**

As Harvey (2013) found in her study on the negotiation and representation of condom use, safer sex taken by women as part of 'up for it' femininity- in which working on sexual skills includes developing the skills to negotiate safer sex- is complex since it involves a negotiation of contrasting norms of appropriate female sexuality (2013:147).

Studies have mentioned that among the reasons that Mexican young women raise for not using condoms or any other prevention option is the anxiety of being perceived by others and themselves as sexually active (and therefore as "loose") and being looked down on and gossiped about (Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998). For a young woman buying condoms, admitting to carrying them, and asking for their use, can signal a lack of sexual innocence and so, a lack of conventional, respectable femininity (Harvey, 2012). Adolescent girls who carry condoms around, may be perceived as being ready for sex or sexually available, a situation that would reduce their eligibility as potential wives (Amuchástegui, 2009). Therefore young women tend to follow the "normative requirement to feign ignorance about sex (including not appearing to be skilled or carry condoms)" so as not to engage in risky positions in terms of female sexual respectability (Harvey, 2012:150). Even in sex education and relationship classes in schools, as Alldred and David (2007), found in their study in the North of England, girls in particular felt that "asking a question in class would implicate them and draw negative judgements about their sexual morals – and it was judgemental responses from teachers, not other pupils that concerned them" (2007:127).

### **3.5.3. - Women's fears of abandonment and violence**

Women's fear of violence and abandonment also diminish young women's confidence and sense of empowerment in their ability to obtain and use

contraceptives, in saying “no” to unwanted sex or in convincing partners to conform to safe sex practices.

As stated previously- especially among communities where teenagers have limited access to economic resources, where the norms for social control of female sexuality are stricter and where the gender inequalities are more evident- many young women’s prerogative is to find a sense of adult femininity in a relationship with a man through conjugal bonds of marriage or through romantic relationship (Szasz, 1995; Leñero, 1994). Therefore, the threat of losing “their” man might strongly prevent some women from doing anything that would jeopardise their relationship, such as, to initiate or maintain the insistence of contraceptive use (Holland *et al.* 1998; Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998). This is so, especially when a young woman must compete for her partner’s affection with other women (Chávez, 1999; Szasz, 1998b). As Ross Frankson (1995) study shows, when a middle-class Jamaican woman asked her husband to use a condom, she was told he could find many women who would not make such request.

“I didn’t challenge him because I don’t want to lose him” (Ross-Frankson, 1995:88).

Especially with less educated teenagers from a lower class, the fear of abandonment can often allow a situation of unequal power to persist within a relationship-a power that can easily reach violent physical and emotional encounters when the man feels vulnerable (Rivas *et al.* 2009; Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998; Rosen, 2004). Some young women seemed to weigh the cost of refusing their boyfriends’ sexual demands, against what they may gain from giving in: a peaceful relationship within and a “certainty” that he would always “love” her.

It is important to clarify that relationships between the sexes vary tremendously with age and education, among other factors. However, as mentioned previously, ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ (Connell, 1995) is usually linked with toughness, power and authority. As Alldred and David (2007) highlight, “Being

‘acceptably’ male in this dominant cultural mode can involve denigrating the feminine” (2007:5). Many adolescents and women from different studies (Holland *et al.* 2004; Rodríguez *et al.* 1995; Salgado, 1998; Wilton, 1997) seemed to be aware of power differentials, inequities and double standards operating within constructions of love and sexual intercourse but have expressed that resistance is complex because of male violence (Taylor, 1994). As Harvey (2012) explains: “resistance to dominant discourses of sexuality can be conceptualised as a continual struggle over meanings and bodily integrity within the context of a society where both symbolic and physical violence shape people’s experiences” (2012:28).

Sexual violence against anybody- but especially against girls and adolescent women- intimidates them and can lead to low self-esteem and little ability for self-assertion. Abuse- verbal, emotional or physical- can define the conditions and time of sexual encounters in some relationships often not leaving room to propose contraceptive methods (Stephenson *et al.* 2006; Rickert *et al.*, 2002; Diop-Sidebé *et al.* 2006; FHI 2007; Salam *et al.* 2006). As a participant from Chávez study expressed:

“I knew Antonio was having affairs with other women but he told me he always used protection with them. That was the only time I dared to ask him to use a condom. I shouldn’t have! He hit me several times, even though I was pregnant” (Norma from Mexico City, in Chávez, 1999:52).

Modern means of managing fertility give women a degree of reproductive autonomy that they did not have before. Such autonomy, no matter how slight, alters the prevailing power relationships between men and women and threatens to disturb deeply ingrained expectations about women’s reproductive obligations. The greater the gender imbalance in a society, the more likely it is that the introduction of contraceptive technology and services will provoke anxieties and conflict within the couple. This domination gives many teenagers, especially in patriarchal societies such as the Mexican, little or no room to control their lives.

### 3.5.4. - Fears and misconceptions

Finally, it is important to consider teenagers' fears and misconceptions about contraception, since in many cases its acceptance also becomes a significant barrier as to method usage.

The side effects perceived to be caused by contraceptives go from the risk of damaging the baby or provoking the mother's death, to infertility, the possibility of getting pregnant even when using contraceptives, as well as, the fear of suffering heavy bleeding, menstrual irregularity, weight gain, or cramps (Osakue and Martin-Hilber, 1998; Wood *et al.* 1998; Wood and Jewkes, 2006).

A study reported that the *tube ligation* was believed to make women fat and weak and could even kill them during the procedure (Castle *et al.* 1999). Irregular bleeding or amenorrhea were common complaints about *injections* and some women even believed that retained menstrual blood was collected behind their eyes, causing swelling (Görgen *et al.* 1993). Common fears found concerning the IUD were related to its possibility of getting lost in the body, cause cancer of the uterus or provoke cervix and chronic waist pain (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Greenstreet and Banibensu, 1997). On the other hand, *vasectomy* is believed by some people, to affect the character of the man, making him become like a woman. Finally, the often found misperceptions about the condom is the fear that its use could decrease a woman's sexual desire (Coggins *et al.* 2000) and the concern that a condom could be left inside the vagina and would have to be removed by a doctor in a hospital (Wood and Jewkes 2006). Condom use has also been considered unnatural and a method which reduces sexual pleasure or sensation. Moreover, a male discourse of condoms as inhibiting male pleasure and being generally unpleasant is often expressed (Chávez, 1999; Jaffe *et al.* 1988; Holland *et al.* 1998; Gavey *et al.* 2001).

“Having sex with a condom is like eating mole [a national dish] with gloves” (Marcos from Mexico City, in Chávez, 1999:60).

In one discussion group, young women said that men do not like to use condoms because: "... it is like eating a sweet with the wrapper on" (Hawkins and Meshesha, 1994:219).

As the information presented shows; while on one hand, teenage girls continue the need of appearing to be sexually passive and ignorant of sexual matters, fear of being considered oversexed and promiscuous when voicing their concerns, thoughts and feelings and worry about losing the relationship with their man and while, in the other hand, adolescent boys continue to feel pressure to develop and prove their masculinity and to fulfil their responsibility of being the providers of information and experience (regardless of the true extent of their true knowledge or sexual experience), they will both have difficulties using the information they have about contraception, before they have sexual intercourse.

### **3.6. - Conclusion**

The information presented in this chapter has been brought together to understand the reasons for teenage pregnancy in Mexico- which are believed to be related in great part- to the social milieu in which adolescents have socialised since the cultural context bears heavily on issues of sexuality, health and gender.

In many patriarchal societies such as the Mexican, women are dominated - explicitly or implicitly- by men in ways that reduce their ability to control their lives. Due to the strong discrimination they face and their disadvantageous situation, motherhood becomes an important pre-requisite for many teenagers to achieve adulthood, to forge a social identity and to gain a certain social position, respect and status. On the other hand, it becomes obvious that to prevent a pregnancy is not just a matter of using a contraceptive device. State and voluntary agencies in different countries have been presenting contraception, and especially condoms, as simple and practical solutions to the

problem of teenage pregnancy. This policy rests on the assumption that a decision to use contraception, especially the condom, is a rational strategy that individuals can negotiate prior to sexual intercourse. Although these views may have some validity, they are considering just part of the whole and are underscoring the influence exerted by the socio-cultural context and gender role expectations over the decision making process.

It is important to understand that women's use of contraceptives can be perceived as a threat to the system of gender relations in societies where, men and women's power is markedly unequal. Even if young women from low socioeconomic classes, possess resources (which is not often the case) -such as adequate education and income- cultural norms regarding appropriate female and male behaviour internalized since childhood, impose psychological, as well as social barriers to teenage boys and, especially to young women, who want to participate in an equal or direct way, in making reproductive decisions.

## CHAPTER IV. - METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. - Introduction

The literature described in the previous chapters provides some insight into issues associated with teenage pregnancy within the Mexican context that need to be addressed. As mentioned previously, the reasons for young people using or failing to use contraception are necessarily complex since the tasks involved in successful, regular contraception can be difficult for young people. Despite the extensive nature of this literature, there is very little published research on this subject that is Mexican- yet there are important social differences between Mexico and other developing and under developing countries- and there are still many issues that require investigation in order to aid the understanding of teenage pregnancy. In addition to this, there has been a lack of attention in this country, on gender and dominant discourses in health and educational programmes. The government has implemented a wide range of educational and health strategies to cover the needs of the youth's sexual and reproductive health. Reports have considered, as important reasons for explaining the lack of success of these programmes the lack of continuity and coordination of multiple actions, as well as, the lack of knowledge of teachers concerning sexual education (Juárez, F., *et al.* 2010). Whatever the reasons could be, it is now 39 years of health programmes, which have not rendered any significant results to prevent teenage pregnancy (Lovera, 2015). This study refers an aspect that I believe is essential and has not been considered with the seriousness required; the influence of gendered dominant discourses in shaping adolescents' sexual lives. This is why - although the information provided in my study refers mainly to the years 1994-1997- is still very relevant now a days.

This was designed to obtain information on the knowledge and views adolescent women and their male partners have about sexuality, contraception, pregnancy and motherhood/fatherhood.

This chapter starts by presenting my research aim and questions and presents the methodological choices made in the process of defining the scope of the research, creating instruments, collecting and analysing information and writing up the final version of this thesis. This chapter also includes the ethical issues, including the privacy and confidentiality of information, as well as, the biases and implications of the research. Finally, the advantages and weaknesses of the research are discussed.

#### **4.2. - Aims**

The aim of my research is to study both the individual and gender characteristics, as well as the cultural aspects and dominant discourses, that intervene in the role of fatherhood and motherhood in working and lower middle class young adolescents. This study tries to examine young men and women's views from their own perspectives. This is in order to understand the reasons for teenage pregnancy, that could be much more powerful in the decision making process, than the lack of knowledge about contraception.

This research tries to provide a partial, but serious, analysis about the issues that gender roles and views elicit in sexuality and in the process of decision-making among adolescents.

There are three aims in the study that arose from the research issues listed above:

- 1) To contribute to the understanding of early parenthood in the current Mexican context, with regard to the future of both young mothers and fathers.
- 2) To gain a greater understanding of the process which leads to early pregnancy and parenthood in this age group, particularly in the context of the increase in the birth rates of single teenage women.

- 3) To gain an understanding of the young women and men's own views on their sexuality and early parenthood.

### **4.3. - Research questions**

This research aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views on their own identities?
- 2) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses on masculinity and femininity that influence their views on the value of young women's education and work?
- 3) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and practices of sexuality?
- 4) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and uses of contraception?
- 5) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views of parenthood and especially motherhood?

### **4.4. - Theoretically informed analysis.**

My theoretical framework concerning gender and sexuality, discussed in Chapters I and II, establishes the importance of exploring how young people are shaped by and are themselves shaping the discursive context in which they are having sex and forming intimate relationships. Based on my research aim and questions the research methodologies that have influenced this work are based on the feminist post-structural and post-structuralism constructionist

approach, since the answers of my participants illustrate discourse, as well as discursive trends.

The feminist post-structuralism theoretical framework has been used in this research since it is useful for helping me understand gender discourses. As Weedon explains, “feminist poststructuralism is a mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theory of language; subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change through a concept of *discourse*” (1997:183). Language, in the form of a historically specific range of ways of giving meaning to social reality, offers various discursive positions that this work will try to identify, including modes of femininity and masculinity, through which my adolescents can consciously live their lives.

This work intends to understand the different forms of subjectivity that are produced culturally and how some of these can shift in the wide range of discursive fields which constitute them. Subjectivity refers, as Weedon (1997) explains, to the individual’s conscious and unconscious emotions and thoughts, her sense of herself, as well as, her way of understanding her relation to the world. There is an interest in revealing ways in which dominant discourses can position these adolescents in “conventional meanings and modes of being” in their sexual lives (Davies, 1990:1). Likewise, there is a concern to understand how teenagers self-regulate their own behaviour -to construct a sense of identity that fits into the norm and resembles the social and gendered expected behaviours, discourses and attitudes- through what Foucault (1978) calls, ‘discourses of the self’. There is also a need to understand how teenagers in this study are shaped by social meanings produced within social institutions and practices - such as the law, the political system, the church, the family, the education system and the media, each of which is located in and structured by a particular *discursive field* (Foucault, 1982), which offers the adolescents a range of modes of subjectivity in their sexuality. The thesis will explore how subjects are constituted through discourses and how this shapes their agency in relation to hegemonic discourses of masculinity and femininity in these

contexts. Do they reproduce normative discourses? Or are there points when they challenge existing power relations and gender discourses? This work intends to show how gender acts, sex and sexuality are performative since -as Butler states- they are in time culturally constructed through a voluntary repetition. When knowing the biological sex of the baby, parents, family and society tend to assign them attributes that arise from socially predetermined expectations. As this study will show in the following chapter, when considering having a boy, parents are already describing it as emotionally stronger than a girl, with greater possibilities of being successful and even 'destined' to have a better or worse quality of life.

Drawing on a feminist post-structuralism approach (Weedon, 1997) also allows me to explore the discourse surrounding inhabiting a working or lower-middle class teenage boy or girl subjectivity in Mexican society. My aim is to use my interview responses to explore how gender is constructed in this setting: a government general hospital in the South of Mexico City that provided service to mainly a working-lower middle class population. As Davison and Frank suggest; "If we see gender as something that you do, we can examine the different ways individual students actively occupy and take up particular gender performances that have social and educational consequences" (Davison and Frank 2006:160).

Moreover, as the post-structural approach highlights, "there is a strong need to locate femininity and masculinity as a complex set of gendered/sexualized representational discourses, practices, signs and subjects (dis) locations, of which idealized/normative forms exist (Butler, 1990; 1993 in Walkerdine and Ringrose 2006:36). Many authors have argued (Moscovici, 1984, Harding (n/d), Butler, 1993; Francis, 2006; Renold and Ringrose, 2008; Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010), there is no universal human being, but men and women are constructed in culturally different ways. There is a need to consider teenagers not as universal individuals, but specific by class, race, generation, culture, who far from being passive recipients, think for themselves and continuously produce

and communicate their specific representations and solutions of the problems that trouble them.

Although I am studying the Mexican cultural context these international research findings about teenage pregnancy are also useful because they shed a different light on the different cultural context around gender discourse. But most importantly, international research focuses on interventions that I do not find in the Mexican literature. The research gives me ways forward on things that have worked or have not worked. This study seeks to draw upon these theoretically informed research projects cited briefly above but explored in depth in my literature review chapter in order to explore the understandings, the ideas, discourses, values and models of sexuality within a sample of Mexican teenagers from working lower-middle class. It also aims to draw out implications as to how the research could be helpful to implement new programs of sex education with this population.

#### **4.5. - Methodology**

The research was undertaken at a government general hospital in the South of Mexico City. It has provided service since 1972 to mainly a working and lower middle class population. At the time of the research, I was working for the Department of Adolescence, which is part of the Department of Obstetrics. It is a division of the hospital with two areas; one that provides family planning services and gives information that address teenagers' reproductive and sexual health needs and, another one -where the present study took place- in charge of doing research with pregnant adolescents.

Dr. Ehrenfeld, director of the Department of Adolescence at the time, planned the original research. The initial purpose of the instrument to be developed for the Department of Adolescence's research was to gather information and create a profile of the adolescent population, seeking the program due to an unplanned pregnancy. This project paid particular attention to how adolescents seek sexual experiences and not a pregnancy, focusing on the lack of sexual

and formal education, as the causes of teenage pregnancies. The objective was to gather information about the teenagers' reproductive health profile, their education history, the onset of their active sexual life, their knowledge, attitude and use of contraceptives, their desire for pregnancy, their views about the possibility of having an abortion and their decision-making chain.

As I was working within Dr. Ehrenfeld's research project, part of my research has the quantitative method already chosen by her. However, permission was given for me to use the findings for my PhD thesis from the participants and from Dr. Ehrenfeld in representation of the hospital. The closed questions used in the final instrument developed, were important for my study since they allowed, as Cohen and Manion (1994) wrote, "to gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions" (1994:83). Biographical questions provided the possibility to collect, in a practical and easy way, general information such as, age, marital state, living conditions, schooling, work history and the adolescents' reproductive history and profile. Likewise, as Patton (1980) states, the closed questions included, were important to gather data about four main topics: behaviour (the individual experience), the adolescents' opinions (what they thought), their feelings (tap into some emotional responses) and their knowledge about sexuality and contraception.

During the formulation of these questions particular care was taken to keep them simple, by not using complex vocabulary and, to maintain a neutral stand by not asking leading questions, i.e. questions that suggested an acceptable answer (Cohen *et al.* 2000). Therefore, the closed questions allowed the inclusion of a larger number of subjects, were cheap to administer and, made the analysis relatively easy (Youngman, 1984). The limited funds available for the study and the need to include as many individuals as possible made the quantitative part of the instrument an important requirement for the Department's needs. However, I believed it was important to bring a qualitative aspect to the research. Studies on sexuality in adolescence with a qualitative perspective enable us to learn more about the views, values, stereotypes and models about sexuality and reproduction than the government, the policy arena,

the family, religious and educational institutions and the media, convey to the adolescent.

Blaxter *et al.* see research as being “powerfully affected by the researcher’s own motivations and values” (Blaxter *et al.* 1999:15) and this seems to be essential in the amendments made to create the final version of the instrument used for my research. I had a personal interest to deepen some questions and explore meaning. I believed it was relevant to explore the social construction and representations of teenagers’ sexuality and the ways in which they practice it, based largely on those constructions and dominant discourses.

As discussed in Chapter I, I believe that “the value” of an unplanned pregnancy is “enhanced” by a view that pregnancy, especially among under-privileged groups, can re-affirm the future parents’ sexual and social identity and, lead them to a higher social status and power within their relationship and in their social milieu. Therefore I had a need to gather information to understand the ideas, values and models of sexuality in the adolescents, which would be helpful to implement new programs of sex education with this population.

With this aim in mind, I asked Dr. Ehrenfeld to authorize me to develop the methodology and data collection to deepen some answers and explore meanings, discourses, views and values by creating additional semi-structured-open and open questions. The addition of these questions offered, as Rich and Ginsburg (1999) state when talking about qualitative methodologies, far greater insight into “why” and “how” -culture and gender discourses and expectations-influence teenage pregnancy, than can quantitative methods. The qualitative part became therefore linked to my definition of sexuality and gender, as socially constructed.

In addition to being responsible for the creation of the Gender section as well as the open-ended questions, I was in charge for registering the answers, not turning it into a self-completing instrument. This situation gave me the opportunity to make some amendments while interviewing the adolescents. In this way the instrument could be adjusted to their views and discourses when

necessary by adding categories and writing verbatim what they wanted to express. The qualitative aspect, given by these additional questions and the way the interviews were conducted, turned the final instrument into a highly structured interview protocol. However, there was flexibility, allowing me to explore how a number of factors such as individual experience, peer influence, culture and beliefs, interact to form the adolescents' perspectives and guide their behaviour. I agree with Marshall and Young (2006) that, conducting research by both qualitative and quantitative methods, can have a greater impact. On one hand, as DeVault (1999) asserts, qualitative methods 'give voice' to women interviewees and emphasizes particularity over generalization. On the other hand, as Spalter-Roth and Hartmann (1991) explain, on policy issues 'hard data' are often needed to persuade those who work outside academia. My research focuses on providing data analysis that, as DeVault (1999) points out, challenge hegemony and traditional notions of what it means to be a woman or a man by using as many tools as needed to understand women and girls, gender issues as well as their experiences and oppression. My research, as other feminist studies, is framed focusing on "power and patriarchy to 'out' hegemony, showing power sources that maintain control over the generation, legitimation and interpretation of research, in ways that advance the interest of dominant groups" (Marshall and Young 2006:67).

Therefore, structured interviews provided me with information which showed how teenagers are strongly influenced by cultural expectations, dominant discourses and social roles, transmitted to them by society. It also gave me information on how these expectations, roles and discourses influence and shape the adolescents' views about themselves, their sexuality, contraception as well as fatherhood and motherhood. In addition to this it is important to highlight that, though the original research did not start with a post-structural framework -since the hospital research project had a quantitative method that was already chosen by the director of the department- I created a *Gender section* with open-ended questions that covered *Reproductive History and Profile* and *Contraception*. This was done with the aim to show how both teenage boys and girls are constructed in culturally different ways, and how this

social construction strongly influences their sexual behaviour and identities. Likewise, my research used a post-structural framework in the interpretation of the findings, since this approach was taken into consideration when the information was collected and was coded to understand the way dominant gender discourses shaped the responses.

The following is an example of how the answers were thematised under gender dominant discourses:

Question: *What do you (or did you) want your first baby to be? Girl \_\_\_ Boy \_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_*

The answers were thematised depending on:

- 1) Characteristics that include those considered socially acceptable or appropriate based on gender, such as tenderness (girls), hyperactivity (boys), intelligence (“girls are less intelligent”), they are less difficult (girls), easier to educate (boys).
- 2) Gender attributions where suppositions that are based on gender and social expectations were considered. such as: The first-born child should be a man, man supports the family.
- 3) Quality life expectations based on gender (men suffer less than women).
- 4) Gender role expectations: boys will be providers while girls will be emotional companions for the parents.

Then other answers that had less to do with dominant discourses were also classified under heading such as:

- 5) Existence or lack of that gender in the extended family (“there are no girls in my family”).

- 6) Personal gratification (personal preference for a gender, greater identification with a gender): I like boys better; I like the idea of a girl etc.

As the above information indicates and as I showed in a more detailed way in section 3.10, I coded the information according to gender characteristics, which I view as socially constructed discourses. This allowed me to explore the responses around gender. Therefore it was mainly in the analysis of the interviewees' answers that I used a post-structural approach to gender construction. I highlighted through my use of theory the way dominant discourses guide many of the adolescents' responses even when they seem to be willing to challenge those discourses about gender.

#### **4.6. - Method**

The constraints experienced in this research design were the demand to create an instrument that could meet the need to include a large sample, with limited funds and time, and a personal interest to study how teenagers are shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views on their own identities and sexual lives. The research design of the Gender Section is however, open to analysis from a poststructuralist approach considering gender discourses and meanings. With questions such as the following ones, I intended to study the way adolescents were shaped by these dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity that are culturally influenced by a patriarchal society in the Mexican context.

##### **4.6.1. - Closed questions**

The closed questions that form part of the instrument were intended to provide a profile of the adolescents. They include general information - such as name, age, marital status of the participants (if they were married, in free union – meaning living together but not married- or separated), living arrangements, schooling and, if it applied, the reasons for school desertion. These questions also gathered information concerning adolescents' work history and reasons for

starting to work, their reproductive history and profile - their age at first intercourse and first pregnancy, the number of children and abortions if any, the number of sexual partners, the duration of the relationship at the time of the pregnancy, their own and partner's sexual life, as well as, their first thoughts and reactions towards the pregnancy (including those of their nuclear family's and in-laws'). Finally, there were other closed questions concerning contraception knowledge, use, method preference and couple's communication concerning family planning methods.

The closed questions were presented in three different ways: 10% of them required a single answer, for example questions such as:

"How old were you when you had intercourse for the first time" \_\_\_\_

"With how many other partners have you had sex before, including the present one? \_\_\_\_

36% had two answer options of yes/no, boy/girl etc., as in:

*By becoming a mother, a woman's importance increases?*  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

*What do you (or did you) want your first baby to be? Girl \_\_\_\_ Boy \_\_\_\_*

Finally 31% had different options from which to choose from or had options that had to be ranked. As the following one:

*What would your partner think if you decided not to have any children?*

*She would support you respecting your decision* \_\_\_\_  
*She would get angry* \_\_\_\_ *She would be disappointed* \_\_\_\_  
*She would not care* \_\_\_\_ *She would leave you* \_\_\_\_

*Why is it important that a woman has children? (Rank the answers)*

*It is the way to fulfil herself in life* \_\_\_\_  
*To be socially accepted* \_\_\_\_  
*To satisfy her maternal instinct* \_\_\_\_

*To have someone to live for \_\_\_\_\_*  
*To have someone who will always love her \_\_\_\_\_*  
*It is not important \_\_\_\_\_*

Being aware that quantitative research can, as Oppong (1982) and Harding (n/d) stated, reinforce assumptions about gender and culture through item construction, there were a few times, especially on closed questions, where an additional type of option had to be added, since many participants used it. For example for the following question: *“Has your partner or any of your previous partners have had an abortion?”* The option *“I don’t know”* had to be included for some young men. Likewise there were a few questions in which the answer given by the participant was not among the different options provided so it had to be included as a new option. For example:

*When do you use a condom?*

*Every time \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ When my partner asks me to \_\_\_\_\_*  
*Never, I don’t like it \_\_\_\_\_ Only when I have sex with other women \_\_\_\_\_*

The option *“I only used it once”* was not considered and was expressed by some participants, so it was registered. This flexibility intended to minimize an “imbalance of power which occurs when researchers maintain all or most of the control over the design and carrying out of the research” (Marshall and Young, 2006:71).

#### **4.6.2. - Open-semi-structured and open questions**

As has been mentioned previously, feminist theories of gender as a complex discursive structure, offer various, related ways to view social relations and critique the assumption of a natural order based on gender. Poststructural feminism in particular offers an opportunity to consider the relationships among language, subjectivity, existing power relations and social organization, in order, as Weedon states, “to understand why women tolerate social relations [that] subordinate their interests to those of men” (Weedon 1987:12). Likewise, as Butler insists, these approaches give a chance to gain a performative

understanding of gender since the repetitious performance of gender itself creates gender and gender norm. This perspective is interesting to understand how power works through normative discourses and how this shapes our understanding of gender, including woman and girlhood and man and boyhood in various cultural and social contexts.

The open-semi-structured and open questions that were included in this research, aim to identify these aspects in order to understand the way adolescents are shaped by dominant gendered discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views on their own identities, their chances to do better through school and work and their ideas and practices of sexuality and contraception, as well as to identify areas and strategies for change.

These additional questions included covered the topics of *Reproductive History and Profile* and *Contraception*. Under *Reproductive History and Profile*, questions intended to gather information concerning reactions, feelings, thoughts and wishes experienced when both male and female teenagers realized for the first time about the pregnancy. On the topic of *Contraception*, the interest was on views, feelings, reasons for using or not using family planning methods and young men's reactions towards the woman using contraception. Likewise, there was an interest in gathering information about the beliefs and misbeliefs about contraception and its influence on sexual desire –comfort, spontaneity and sexual enjoyment –.

To deepen into some answers I developed an additional section of the instrument, specifically on *Gender* issues. This section intended to gather information about teenagers' views, discourses and beliefs on gender roles in school and work, children's gender preference, views about manhood and womanhood, the different definitions of what a responsible man and woman are, as well as, information concerning views about motherhood and fatherhood and the impact of parenthood in teenagers' lives. Finally, the gender section also gathered information concerning gender and sexuality –adolescents' views about premarital sex, sexual roles and socially expected behaviours and sexual pleasure and sexual desire, all based on gender.

It is important to mention that some questions were stated in third and not in first person. This way of presenting the questions produced significant differences in the answers as will be explained in the next section of this chapter.

My final instrument (Appendix I) therefore, had an initial quantitative section which helped me collect background evidence of teenagers' life, experience and attitudes and, additional semi-structured-open and open questions, which – together with the fact that I was conducting the interviews in person- allowed me to deepen into some answers and themes.

#### **4.7. - Research process**

The psychologist of *The Department of Adolescence*- in charge of imparting information about family planning and providing services that addressed teenagers' reproductive and sexual health needs- was the one to approach the teenagers and ask them if they would like to participate in the research. Once the adolescents accepted to join in the study, the strategy adopted was to introduce myself as a research psychologist from the hospital, which was undertaking research. The aim of the study was explained to them. It was to gather information and create a profile of the adolescent population seeking the program due to a pregnancy. The specific interest was to obtain information on their beliefs and views concerning gender roles, sexuality, contraception, motherhood/fatherhood, about their sexual practices and their relationship as a couple or their relationship with their ex-partner (when talking with young women who did not have a partner at the time of the interview).

Besides presenting myself and explaining the purpose of the research, my objective was to make the teenagers feel part of a project the aim of which was to benefit them, by providing them with a service that would better cover their needs and expectations. Anonymity was promised and respected. No incentives or benefits were offered for participating. It was made very clear to young participants that if they decided not to collaborate in the research, there

would not be any detrimental effects in their care. I accepted their verbal agreement as consent, which demonstrated that I was listening and granting their words the status to consent to join the study and valuing what they said. The safeguards I employed against them feeling pressured to participate were the psychologist asking first so that they were not declining to my face and stating clearly that it was completely independent of their medical treatment at the hospital. Less than 5% of them did not agree to participate at this initial request.

Due to the length of the structured interview, only two adolescents were scheduled per day; one in the morning and the second one early in the afternoon. This allowed me to take a break between interviews. The application of the structured interviews was done individually and in a private office with the door closed. The office was divided into two sections by a glass division and a glass door; the first section was furnished with a main desk and two chairs. The second section of the office had a rounded table with four chairs. Since the structured interview was not pressed by time, the interviewees were allowed to take as long as they needed to answer the questions. The duration of the interview was approximately two-hours. However, they could request a recess if needed, a private bathroom was next door and they had access to bottled water during the interview.

The structured interviews were numbered and just the first name of the adolescent was written on it. In order to identify a couple, the number of the structured interview was matched with the number of her/his partner. I was the one who asked the questions together with the different options of response. I decided to interview the adolescents in the round table and not behind a desk since I believed that this arrangement reduced formality and hierarchy to the interview. When the interviews were taking place, nobody was working in the main desk. The adolescents were told they could chose not to answer a question if they felt they did not want to respond or felt uncomfortable and, could also stop the interview whenever they felt like. The fact that none of them stopped the interview nor chose to avoid any questions was seen as a sign of

the rapport that was established as well as the atmosphere of trust that was created.

The answers were recorded verbatim. As Bell states: “a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability” (Bell, 1999:135) and my instrument offered every elaboration possible or any doubts to be resolved. In addition to this, its flexibility allowed it to be adjusted to the participants’ views, when necessary, by adding categories or writing verbatim what they wanted to express. Therefore, each interview, although based on the same instrument schedule, could differ according to the participant’s responses. As DeVault (1999) asserts, qualitative methods give voice to respondents, allowing them to help determine the direction and focus of the research, and emphasizing particularity over generalization. In order to try to gather more genuine answers from the participants some of the questions of the instrument were stated in third person. This format produced, as expected, differences in the answers and showed that, when the adolescents talked about people in general, their views were very different from those obtained when they talked about themselves. These differences in views depending on how the question was presented, could suggest three different things. Firstly that it might be easier to collect more genuine answers when the question refers to a third person than when the respondents are directly faced with the question and might “worry” about the interviewer’s (who happens to be a woman) opinion. Secondly, adolescents might have accepted some of these general propositions but nonetheless find it difficult to apply them to their personal situation. Teenagers in this study could be realizing that the gender differences they have experienced are not simply natural, but socially or historically determined and therefore debatable. Thirdly, the participants could be part of a group of young men and women who seems to have been able to fight against gender discourses imposed on them but believe that, men in general, are still uncritically engaged in dominant discourses.

Whenever the participant did not understand a question he or she was encouraged to ask for clarification. Likewise, when I did not fully understand

their responses, I asked for clarification. It is important to mention that in general the language used in the interview, although it was emotionally charged, it was simple vocabulary trying to avoid confusing terminology. Likewise, I usually understood the responses and slang used by the adolescents. If ever there were ever terms unfamiliar to me, I made sure to look for clarification before writing the answer.

#### **4.8. - Sample**

This research is a “snapshot” of adolescents’ views on gender roles in sexuality, contraception, pregnancy and motherhood/fatherhood, at a particular time.

The young people who were asked to participate in the study were pregnant adolescents and their partners, from working middle-lower class. It is important to mention that the socioeconomic category “middle-lower class” was assigned by the Social Work department of the Hospital, based on the adolescents’ standard of living and income at the time of the interview.

Undoubtedly gender inequity and other sociocultural aspects related to women’s condition of inequality, worsen in a context of poverty and lack of opportunities. However this research does not intend to make claims about how class and gender worked together with the Mexican young people. It just describes a sector of the Mexican population. The interviewees regularly attended *The Department of Adolescence* to receive orientation sessions on sexuality and family planning methods. The major reason for teenagers refusing to participate was a reluctance to spend additional time in the hospital or, especially among men, an unwillingness or inability to leave work.

The final sample was comprised of a total of 151 young women distributed as follows:

- 20 with partners. However, their partners did not come to the interview because, they either could not take a workday off or, because they were not interested in participating in the research.
- 17 who were not living with the baby’s father because:

- They left them before knowing about the pregnancy (5 of them).
- They separated from them after the awareness of the pregnancy (10 of them).
- They found out about the pregnancy after the separation (2 of them).
- 51 living with their partners who were older than 20 years old.
- 63 with partners aged 20 or less years old.

And 75 young men distributed as follows:

- 63 with partner's aged 20 or under.
- 12 aged twenty or less, whose partners could not be interviewed due to the stage of the pregnancy or health reasons.

The teenagers interviewed were all under 20 years old with an average age of 17 for women and of 18 for men. Most of the teenage girls interviewed (44%) were between 13 and 16 years old, while the majority of the male participants (55%) were between 18 and 19 years of age.

#### **4.9. - Validity and reliability**

Insofar as the definitions of reliability and validity in quantitative research reveal two strands: Firstly, with regards to reliability, whether the result is replicable. Secondly, with regards to validity, whether the means of measurement are accurate and whether they are actually measuring what they are intended to measure (Golafshani, 2003).

Qualitative and quantitative researchers view the concepts of reliability and validity differently. As Hoepfl (1997) points out, while qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding and extrapolation to similar situations, quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction and generalization of findings. The question of replicability in the results does not concern them (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992), but precision (Winter, 2000),

credibility and transferability (Hoepf, 1997) provide the lenses for evaluating the findings of a qualitative research. In this context, the two research approaches or perspectives are essentially different paradigms (Kuhn, 1970).

As I previously mentioned, the conception of sexuality in my project is based on the feminist post-structuralism and post-structuralism constructionist approaches. These approaches rest on the common epistemological premise that truths or meaning are not independent, but are socially created, mutable and flexible but also highly regulated. As Crotty (1998) explains, instead of uncovering an objective truth, we create truth or meaning through engaging with realities in our world. In any qualitative research, the aim is to "engage in research that probes for deeper understanding rather than examining surface features" (Johnson, 1995:4) and, constructivism may facilitate that aim.

Considering the above information, the following are issues concerning the validity of my research as well as some aspects that could complicate its reliability.

#### a) Interview environment

Among the advantages present in the current study, is the atmosphere created during the structured interviews. I believe it was possible to establish an appropriate relationship, which allowed the gathering of information in a comfortable atmosphere, given the constraints of a hospital. Most of the participants were willing to talk about their experiences and their sexuality; they were able to express a diversity of views that showed both traditional and anti or non-traditional answers. Even though some were shy or felt uncomfortable (this was identified by their body language, the change in their facial expression and a greater amount of fillers in their language), the richness and fullness of the answers suggests that they were still comfortable enough to respond sometimes in significant detail. My being an older and an educated female staff from the hospital and being a clinical psychologist used to working with children and adolescents, was significant in that it allowed me to try to establish a kind of rapport that motivated most teenagers to express themselves in an open way in the face to face aspect of the data collection.

The fact of being a clinical psychologist positions me in a unique way as therapist or helper to young people, which I am reflexive about (see for instance Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). My goal was to actively listen and comprehend what the interviewees were telling me and accept a variety of views that were being expressed without making value judgments on their actions or beliefs. I worked to recognize when space was needed and to work with anxiety and nervousness. Many qualitative researchers have discussed the role of empathy and understanding, which may or may not work to establish rapport (Walkerdine et al. 2001). In my case, sensitivity in previously working with underprivileged populations in different government hospitals and settings, was important in trying to broach discussions. For instance body language including face expressions, evasive comments and the use of fillers -verbal slurs used to fill the gaps in the conversation- when the participant is feeling uncomfortable or prefers to avoid answering the question in a frank way were considered (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). I worked to explore sociocultural norms and communicate with a diverse population through an open perspective.

b) My position as a researcher.

There are many elements that can influence the kind of responses obtained through interviews. As Marshall and Young state “One type of power imbalance involves the different positionalities of the researcher and the researched. The hierarchies that are created from these differences can have powerful impacts on the research process, the data, the findings, and the people involved” (2006:71). Considering that I was an “insider researcher” in this study, since I had a direct involvement with the Hospital (Robson, 2002:382), and that the participants were radically culturally and economically different from me there was a risk of not being fully objective. However, I believe that I had the potential to increase validity due to the added richness of the information acquired.

Although one can never guarantee the honesty and openness of subjects and considering that my study could have been influenced by my subjectivity, I tried- as Hammersley (2000) recommends- to minimize the impact of biases during

my research process by making it transparent, honest and trustworthy. In addition to this and aware of the fact that “A self-reflexive understanding of one’s identity is a necessary part of understanding the impact of one’s presence and perspective on the research” (Olesen, 2000:165), I tried to develop a close relationship with my participants through dialogue, paying close attention to being respectful, humble and self-reflexive.

Finally, Fontana and Frey (1994) highlight the importance of accessing the setting, presenting oneself and establishing rapport to the process in interviewing. All these aspects were considered in this study.

### c) Confidentiality.

The issue of confidentiality may also have influenced the quality of the information obtained. Some of the adolescents were especially susceptible to the possibility of confidentiality being broken, especially with their partners. This is to say, there was a concern that the partner could have access to his/her answers. Other teenagers also feared that I would use the information for different purposes. Finally there was a fear that their answers could jeopardize their treatment. For example there were few interviewees who were concerned that their lack of knowledge about the kind and use of contraceptives -after receiving several classes where that information was offered- could show that they were not committed to the guidance provided by the Department. Others were concerned that their number of previous sexual partners could affect their stay in the orientation sessions. In order to reassure them and allay fears about the study, I assured them that the focus of the study was on the responses as a whole and not on the individual as a patient. I clearly explained to them that the only two people in the department who would have access to the interviews were Dr. Ehrenfeld and myself. In addition to this, only the first name was registered in the structured interview and they were given the option to use a pseudonym and not their real name if they wished. None of them did.

#### d) The instrument.

In this research I combine the use of closed questions with open-semi-structured and open ones. This gave the research a more qualitative aspect. I also had the flexibility to adjust my pre-designed instrument since I was using it as an interview schedule. This flexibility enabled me to appropriately adjust my instrument so that young people's views were recorded as conscientiously as possible.

#### e) Data collection.

The answers were recorded by hand as literally as possible to avoid, as Cohen *et al.* (2000) mention, summarizing responses in the course of the interview. This had the disadvantage of sometimes breaking the continuity of the interview and may have resulted in a bias because I may have unconsciously emphasized responses that agree with my expectations and fail to note those that do not. In order to minimize this possible bias I asked participants to review the reported information when this was more detailed, to check that it corresponded to their own "subjective reality" (Cohen *et al.* 2000:11).

In addition to this, and related to the validity of my information, it is important to highlight that, I attempted to minimize the 'translation' of adolescents' views by my narrative by presenting quotations that allowed them to 'speak by themselves'. However, one has to remember, "quotations are still selected by the researcher" (Rabinow, 1987:246). Atkinson (1992) corroborates this view by saying that "in order to make the talks of interviews readable it is necessary to select and edit". He points out that "there is no speech so fluent, punctuated, and grammatical that makes an easy reading. The use of oral and written words is different. The editing of everyday speech aims at providing a readable text with 'people's voices', but brings along the editorial control of the writer" (Atkinson, 1992:23).

The fact that I administered the structured interview to all the interviewees could have brought challenges and advantages for the reliability and validity of the study. Among the challenges are:

1) The possibility of focusing on a certain kind of response that was meaningful to me and disregard other possible ones, but this is a risk of any qualitative data collection and analysis. As Marshall and Young state, one of the power imbalances in a research “derives from the researcher’s paradigm and perspectives dominating the interpretations” (Marshall and Young, 2006:71). However, my coding strategy helped me see patterns in views as well as the prevalence of dominant discourses. There was an interest to question traditional assumptions about the patterns and why they exist. The intention was to frame these patterns as the effect of the social construction of gender and therefore these codes allowed me to interpret gender and consider the complexity of how gendered meanings are made.

2) The chance to assume that I fully understand their answers because they cover what I needed to hear. Having had other interviewers could have shown a variety of trends and answers as the result of different styles of interviewing. Among the advantages, the fact that the same style of handling the interview was present could have helped to be consistent with a reaction to get answers to the questions without influencing the answer, either by putting words into the adolescents’ mouths or directing them towards one kind of answer. Likewise, the fact of being the only interviewer allowed me feedback to complex replies to clarify their communication and meanings.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the information collected in this work did not go back to those who provided it, in order to assess its representativeness. As Gastaldo (1996) mentions in cases like this one, “the final report of a research juxtaposes the views of the social actors to the interpretative schema. This means that the texts produced do not represent the positions of a group, but also are not solely made of the understanding of the researcher about other people’s accounts” (Gastaldo, 1996:58).

#### f) Results.

Some questions were influenced by the actual situation of the participants and therefore the answers should be taken with some considerations. An example of this, were questions referring to premarital sex for women. The fact that most of the participants are not married and are sexually active could have influenced their responses and explain either their “liberal views” or simply the way they are justifying their behaviour.

#### **4.10. - Analysis of the answers**

The answers collected from the structured interviews form much of the substance of Chapters V through VII, to help evaluate the specific views of the adolescents. The analysis of the answers is compatible with a poststructural approach since I highlight – through theory- the way the dominant discourses shape many of my adolescents, even when they seem to be willing to challenge those discourses. In addition to this, the information gathered is supported by statistical information in these chapters to give a better description of the characteristic of my sample. The Figures and Tables are presented separately in Appendix II.

The capture and processing of the open and closed questions, of both young men and women’s structured interviews, was done using the SPSS statistic package (1999). This was done first through the definition of each variable on a spread sheet and later by a descriptive analysis. The frequency analysis of the data obtained through the structured interviews was done as follows: for the hypothesis, the chi-square test was used to compare two categorical variables, of two or more options of responses. In the case of the 2X2 tables, the Fisher PSLD test was used.

For the closed questions the adolescents were divided into two groups: “Single” (those whose partners did not attempt the interview) and “Couple” (those whose partner were also interviewed). Under each questions, depending on the answer –affirmative or negative in the case of the following example- the

number of the adolescent (based on the number of her/his structured interview) was registered, as the following example shows:

*An adolescent turns into a woman when she has a baby?*

Yes:

Couple: 1,2,4,5,10,14,16,18,19,20,21,22,24,27,29,30,32,38,39,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,51,52,54,56,57,58,62,63.

Single young women: 1,3,4,6,8,10,11,13,15,16,18,19,20,21,22,24,25,27,28,29,30,34,35,38,39,40,42,43,44,45,46,48,51,52,54,56,57,60,61,62,63,64,67,68,69,70,71,72,73,74,75,78,79,80,81,82,83,84,85,86,87.

No:

Couples: 3,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,15,17,23,25,26,28,31,33,34,35,36,37,40,41,50,53,55,59,60,61.

Single young women:

2,5,7,9,12,14,17,23,26,31,32,33,36,37,41,47,49,50,53,55,58,59,65,66,76,77,88.

This grouping was done in order to be able to make analyses comparing answers given by teenagers who had a partner and those who did not during their pregnancy. For example when considering why a young woman stopped studying, the analysis showed that teenage girls without a partner gave reasons related to economic difficulties, the union (at the time of the pregnancy) and the pregnancy. On the other hand, adolescent girls with a partner left school mainly due to the union and the pregnancy.

For the open-ended questions the organization of the answers gathered was more complex. In order to facilitate the handling of the information gathered- with the 45 open questions for adolescent boys and 40 open questions for teenage girls- all the answers were first transcribed in a document under their respective questions. Once done, five attempts were made to group the answers under specific gender dominant discourse theme for each. After each answer or group of similar answers, the number of the structured interview of the person who gave the information was included. The gender categories

were reviewed and refined until the fifth attempt became the final version. I adopted a categorizing strategy for my qualitative information, which helped me move my analysis from a broad reading of the answers towards discovering patterns and developing themes. Through this coding instrument I decided what was a dominant gender discourse of masculinity, femininity etc. Following is a more detailed example on the process:

*What does it mean to you to be a man?*

Answers that I believed followed the same pattern and had to do with the dominant discourse that describes a man as the provider, were categorized under the theme *Division of labour by gender/provider*. Answers such as:

“To take care of my wife, not get mad, to have a good relationship with her, to look after my children and my wife”.

“To look after your family, giving them everything they needs, support and understanding”.

“Face the problems, fulfil my duties such as to take care of the people he loves, to give them the best of him, and be the best for his family”.

“Always look after his family”.

“It is an advantage because you can support the family you love”.

Those answers that followed a same pattern and had to do with the dominant discourses that describe a man based on specific *Psychological characteristics* were categorized under that theme. Answers such as:

“Someone who is brave, has strength of character and takes decisions”.

“A man is the one who tries to solve the problems trough words and not fighting”.

“Someone honest, cult and educated”.

“Someone who knows how to react to he mistakes, that can make and accept them and look for solutions”.

Other answers that had to do with man superiority vis-à-vis women and their control over them, were categorized under the theme *Superiority/control over the woman*. Answers such as:

“To be the one who has the control at home and is the head of the family”.

“To be superior to the woman”.

“Not to beat the woman nor tell her off outside the home”.

Answers related to the theme. greater freedom and less criticism that men have par rapport to women were categorized under the theme “Advantages”. Answers such as:

“In the workplace they favour men”.

“Has greater freedom to do what he wants and as he pleases”.

“Someone who receives fewer criticisms by society compared to women”.

The theme *Respectful/protector* included answers that talked of a caring person such as someone who; “stands up for the woman and supports her”, “helps a lady” and “respects his partner”. Procreation was also considered when the answer limited itself to describing a man based on his ability to have children. Finally there were teenage boys who expressed not knowing what it means to be a man. Therefore a category *Don't know* was also included.

The next step was to encode the answers -as the following example shows- and then capture and process the data using the SPSS statistic package (1999) to obtain the answers' frequencies.

1. Division of labour by gender/provider
2. Psychological characteristics
3. Superiority/control over the woman
4. Advantages
5. Respectful/protector

6. Procreation

7. Don't know

This categorizing strategy for my qualitative information, as I mentioned, helped me move my analysis from a broad reading of the answers, towards discovering patterns and developing themes. It is important to explain that the strategy adopted was to work with the information gathered in Spanish. For the purpose of presenting the research in a British Institute, just the parts that were going to be included in the Analysis of the Answers Chapters were translated into English. This was done in such a way due to the vast quantity of material and transcription of the open-ended questions, which made it impossible to translate all the information collected. The greater challenge was trying to translate, as accurately as possible, the different slang used in Spanish. To accomplish this, two British English speaking people were involved in the translation and a person who spoke Spanish and English fluently proofread my work. When it was difficult to find a translation of a specific Mexican expression or idiom in English, I decided to explain what that terminology meant in Mexico. Likewise, it is worth mentioning that once working with the percentages, I constantly return to the verbatim answers to capture the specific dominant discourse that was predominantly present in that category and used examples to try to emphasize particularity over generalization (DeVault, 1999). It is important to highlight that, although broad themes can be picked out from accounts, different young women and men chose different constellations of arguments, neither used one set of discourse consistently.

The analysed information of the quantitative and qualitative parts of the instrument is included in Chapters V through VII. The information obtained through the open questions will be presented with specific quotes in order to exemplify, as much as possible, the original discourse of the interviewees.

Chapter V explores the adolescents' discourses about binaries and hierarchies of femininity and masculinity. The information presented, shows how traditional gender discourses govern Mexican teenagers' lives and, demonstrates how the adolescents are strongly influenced by dominant discourses that place men in a

position of superiority and authority (hegemonic masculinity) while the teenage girls internalize their devalued status within their family and their society.

As Chapter VI shows, a limiting and oppressive double standard for young women is also obvious in the area of sexuality. Sexual activity is often considered a prerogative of masculinity while female sexuality, is strongly subject to moral judgement. All this information goes to some length to explain how the masculine dominance clearly manifests itself in this area, leaving little space for young women to have control over their bodies and selves in relation to sex, contraception and pregnancy. Fortunately however, this chapter also shows how a significant percentage of teenagers from this study, are no longer uncritically engaging in dominant discourses and are voicing less traditional attitudes towards sex and sexual stereotypes.

Chapter VII demonstrates how the value of a pregnancy, is “enhanced” by different views related to love, status and power thought to be gained by the adolescents, strongly influencing many teenage unplanned pregnancies. It shows how fatherhood- and specially motherhood- become for many young men and women an important pre-requisite to achieve adulthood, forge a social identity and gain respect, privileges, space and status within their relationship and within society.

Due to the limited existing studies on these issues in the Mexican context, this research represents a contribution to the understanding of teenagers’ personal and sexual identities, identities which, as Lico and Luttrell mention “are formed by multiple and sometimes competing images and voices” about who they are, how they should look and feel as well as, what they should want for themselves (Lico and Luttrell, 2011:673).

#### **4.11. - Ethical issues**

The more procedural aspects of the research ethics process and how these were managed are outlined in this section of the chapter. As mentioned

previously, the psychologist of the Department of Adolescence in charge of providing services that address teenagers' reproductive and sexual health needs, was the one to ask the adolescents if they wanted to participate in the project. Opportunities to explain the objectives of the study and to clarify the expectations of researchers and research participants were offered and all the young people participating in the study gave informed consent verbally.

During the development of the research there was a permanent concern with privacy and confidentiality of information. In terms of the structured interviews, the anonymity of the identity of the respondent was ensured. No personal data were included in the instrument, which could enable identification of the young person by anyone inside or outside the hospital and not even the partner was allowed to see his or her partner's responses. The adolescents were told that besides Dr. Ehrenfeld and I, other people who will be helping with the analysis of the information and other aspects of the research, would have access to their structured interviews. However, it was highlighted that the principles of anonymity and confidentiality agreed would never be compromised in any way when sharing the information with these people. As I stated previously, I accepted the adolescents' verbal agreement for their participation in my study.

It is important however to explain that the fieldwork took place prior to ethical protocols being in place through my PhD study. Since this time (the mid 1990s) consent practices have tightened and these days I would have allowed a written consent form to be signed and then to opt into the study without penalty. There were many instances where young people were clearly selecting the information that they chose to share. I gained awareness of this when the answers for certain topics were more ambiguous or when asked to elaborate on an answer, the response was evasive or not as congruous as expected. I tried to respect their answers with an attempt to try to return to it through other related questions. For example previous and present sexual experience(s) and beliefs about abortion could present emotionally loaded themes and were explored only to the extent that adolescents were comfortable talking about them. This produced different levels of detail provided.

In terms of power relations it would be naive to consider that the adolescents were not influenced, not only by my presence but also by my age, my level of education, my hierarchical position and my gender. In addition to this, I have to admit that I felt empathy toward the views of the female interviewees therefore my perceptions could have shaped the writing of this document. As Clifford mentions, "researchers may write against or within groups, institutions, and traditions" (Clifford, 1986:6). Probably a larger amount or emphasis of criticism and scepticism was used in the analysis of the answers gathered of the men's accounts than of the women's accounts. Knowing the "*machista*" behaviour often present in issues like pregnancy and sexuality, probably drove me to treat the information collected from the women with more 'empathy' than the men's. This judgement was recurrent and interfered in the way I elaborated some of the questions. Nevertheless, being aware of it helped me try to prevent this set of values from prevailing on the analysis.

In addition to this, although teenagers could choose whether or not to participate in the study, I admit that because of my position in the hospital, they may have felt under the pressure to cooperate. Therefore, some teenagers might have not been willing participants, which could have had an impact on their honesty and thus on the quality of the information gathered.

Since the themes covered were sensitive topics with young people, at the end of the structured interview, adolescents were told that if they needed to deal with feelings that the research had produced, they could receive further support from Dr. Ehrenfeld, someone from the Psychiatry Department of the hospital or from myself.

The structured interviews were undertaken in Mexico, my homeland. Therefore, the instrument together with its answers, were translated in order to present this work to English readers. The fact of writing in English about a research carried out in Mexico influences the selection of information that is presented. As an author, I keep reminding myself that I am writing the thesis for English readers

and at the same time, confronting my writing with the aims of the study, trying to reach a balance between the information that aids the understanding of the context and the information that constitutes the core of the study.

#### **4.12. - Critical reflections**

There were a number of limitations in the current study, which should be considered, since they might have implications for future work in this field.

1) As mentioned previously, I entered a research, which was already planned for the needs and interests of the hospital that hired me to do the study. This thesis is really a ramification of such research. Therefore the final instrument is influenced by the circumstances. As stated previously I did develop additional open and semi-structured open questions, as well as a complete gender section, for the purpose of my work but always conformed to the structure of the already planned instrument.

2) Concerning the sample used for my research it is worth mentioning four important points:

a) The sample used in this research was a “non-probability sample” (Cohen and Manion, 1994:88) with participants selected for “convenience” as they attended this government hospital to obtain medical attention due to a pregnancy. The fact that it was a government hospital determined the working and lower middle class of the adolescents. Given more time and resources, it would have been desirable to include the experiences of young people from other areas in Mexico and other socioeconomic levels. Likewise, it would have been interesting to have a comparative sample of teenagers who were not attending the hospital and did not have, perhaps, the pressure to participate for fear of some kind of reprisal from the hospital.

b) The original project was designed to focus mainly on intra-group differences within a specific age range and did not use a comparison group.

c) Some questions were influenced by the actual situation of the participants. Due to this, the answers should be taken with some considerations. An example of this, were questions referring to premarital sex for women. The fact that most participants were not married and were sexually active could have influenced their responses and explain either their "liberal views" or simply the way they were justifying their behaviour.

d) Finally, the fact that the sample was selected from the hospital and that there was a timeframe to cover, made it impossible to interview more adolescent men or to include a greater number of couples.

3) There was no scope to look at the longer-term outcomes of these young people's lives after the birth of their baby. This would have required a longitudinal research design adequately resourced to enable such outcomes to be studied.

4) The biases and difficulties that might have been introduced by a face-to-face situation as against self-completion is also an aspect that requires attention. The topics considered were sensitive ones and of a personal nature. It is already difficult for many people to get in touch with their own sexuality- their sexual practices, their sexual pleasure, views of sexuality and contraception- even more so to discuss them with a perfect stranger. For many participants, especially women, the scenario was an uneasy one not only due to the topics touched but because many were unmarried and pregnant. I infer this because in Mexico, a mostly catholic country, women 'should' get married before getting pregnant.

5) Considering my position as a researcher, it is worth to highlight that I was the only person who analysed the answers collected and the information did not go back to those who provided it, in order to assess its representativeness. As Gastaldo (1996) mentions in cases like this one, "the final report of a research juxtaposes the views of the social actors to the interpretive schema. This means that the text produced does not represent the positions of a group, but also are not solely made of the understanding of the researcher about other people's accounts" (Gastaldo, 1996:58).

6) In this work I asked many questions which deal with discourses of gender and sexuality. Maybe if I had done something with further qualitative detail I would have been able to explore some of those issues in greater depth. What my research does is to provide information about quite a large number of young people and it forms a certain baseline that other people can then work from. Therefore, other qualitative projects can use the information obtained in this work and strengthen some of the issues that emerged in the present study. Finally, the options such as "I don't know", "The same" or "Both" were found to be more evasive than true choices of the participants. Therefore I believe that in order to obtain more accurate responses the interviewer should be careful when using options such as the ones mentioned previously and allow vague or evasive answers.

In spite of the potential difficulties and conditions under which the interviews took place and the answers were analysed, I was able to gather more information than I would have done in a quantitative research as well as information that was not all together superficial.

#### **4.13. - Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research approach of the study, which was based on a mixed methodology design that gathered statistical numerical data as well as using feminist and post-structuralism and post-structuralism constructionist research approaches to explore gender discourses. Some of these methodologies were not conceived on the method of the initial research. However, the production of additional open-ended questions related to dominant discourses that shape adolescents' sexual behaviour as well as their analysis, was more influenced by these approaches and allowed me to identify this type of trends. An advantage of qualitative methodologies and analysis is that it considers historic, social, cultural and psychological elements of sexuality, with an interdisciplinary view.

In the following chapters, the analysis of the information from the structured interviews is presented. Performing the analysis based on the a post-structural approach helped me understand how discursive practices “are structured, what power relations they produce and reproduce, where there are resistances and where we might look for weak points more open to challenge and transformation (Weedon, 1987: 136). These approaches provided me with a means “to situate and understand the discourses of power and practice that influence the naming, defining and living of teenage pregnancy” (Pillow, 2003:150) within the context of the Mexican community I was researching.

## **CHAPTER V. - GENDER DISCOURSES: EXPLORING TEEN'S TALK ABOUT BINARIES AND HIERARCHIES OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY IN MEXICO**

### **5.1. - Introduction**

The daily impact of culture and tradition on the power men have over women and the form that power takes varies from culture to culture and, from one period of history to another (Connell, 2006). Gender relations in Mexico -during the time of the study and even nowadays- are characterized by a primarily patriarchal or male-dominant culture despite formal legislation supporting gender equality. It is worth stating that gender equality does not only imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be accorded equal rights, opportunities, treatment, education and equal pay for equal work.

Previous research has shown that in societies characterized by gender inequalities and low female status, women and men are brought up believing that women's discrimination, which deprives them of the conditions to negotiate entitlement like education and work, is a natural or normal condition (García and De Oliveira, 1994; Medrano, 1994; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; UN, 2012). As the Mexican politic analyst Denisse Dresser (2015) express, 60 years after women's suffrage (October 17th, 1953), Mexican women are still considered second class citizens, they live in a society in which sexual harassment is not a crime and 6 out of 10 suffer some kind of violence. In addition to this, 4 out of 10 men think there is not use to educate a woman.

Likewise, the gender structures of a society such as the Mexican, define specific patterns of behaviour as feminine and masculine. As Connell explains, "The form of masculinity which is culturally dominant in a given setting is called 'hegemonic masculinity'. 'Hegemonic' signifies a position of cultural authority and leadership, not total dominance; other forms of masculinity persist alongside" (Connell, 2006:21). On the other hand, different forms of femininity

may emerge and disappear, however they are all constructed in the context of the subordination of women to men.

The different forms of femininity mentioned by Connell are; 1) compliance with this subordination by accommodating the interest and desires of men “emphasized femininity”, 2) resistance or forms of non-compliance and 3) complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and cooperation (Connell, 2006). A significant percentage of results presented in this chapter, are based on gender discourses that support these forms of masculinity and femininity. Starting with the preference for baby boys vis-à-vis girls that is often explained, at least in part, by these discourses and female discrimination. Young women and men, from a very early age, start to internalize women’s devalued status within their society, and accept or consider normal their lack of possibilities to improve their situation. Women are brought up to believe that their place is in the home and, men to believe that they are the ones who should be responsible for providing for their family (Freedman and Maine, 1993; Grant, 1995; Valdés, 1995; Chávez, 1999; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000). Women’s role is therefore defined around motherhood and the private sphere and men’s roles defined more in relation to the public sphere according to these traditionalist discourses.

In the last decades important changes regarding the situation of Mexican women have taken place. These changes can be seen in the greater incorporation of women to education, work and access to health services among other aspects. However, there is still a long way to go to achieve a more egalitarian society (INEGI, 2013a). Based on this premise, there is a need to have information that allows us to determine the proportions and visualize the aspects in which the gap between women and men persist and are shaped in an important way by economic factors related to the population included in this work, as other studies and surveys have shown (Consejo Nacional para prevenir la Discriminación et al. 2012; Stern, 2007; Szasz, 2006).

In this chapter information is gathered about these forms of traditional gender discourses and how these govern Mexican teenagers' lives. Results will show how these gender discourses dictate why it is better to have a boy, the importance of the degree of education for young women, what are the jobs, if any, that they "should" or could have, the degree of preparation that they can reach in order not to "disturb" the gender hierarchy and finally, what is expected from a man and from a woman. Based on this information- as this chapter will show- it is possible to understand how gender plays out in an array of ways in the lives of Mexican teenagers. The chapter will also show how the teens are invested in traditional gender discourses that place the male in a position of superiority and authority (hegemonic masculinity), which may go to some length to explain the lack of control that young women have over their bodies and selves in relation to sex and pregnancy, which is the topic of the following chapters.

## **5.2. - Offspring gender preference**

The preference for boys vis-à-vis girls in societies characterized by gender inequalities and low female status, is often based on discourses that play a key role in the social construction of an individual's reality (Whisnant, 2012).

For the purpose of this work it is important to understand how people's expectations about the role they will play in their lives are shaped -since they are born- influencing not only their behaviour but their life's opportunities. This is why this chapter starts with the offspring gender preference to show the dominance of masculinity in the gender order in Mexican society.

As the results show, there is an interest in most of the participants to have both gender children in their future family. However, when faced with the possibility of having same sex children the percentages increased significantly- especially among teenage boys (72% vs. 59%) in favour of having only boys. Most of the reasons obtained for gender preferences were strongly influenced by gender dominant discourses. The boys are considered as having greater importance just because they are boys. As Carmela (15 years old) explained, "boys are the

most important” or as Rafael (20 years old) mentioned; “he is going to be the first-born child, it is okay that he is a boy. So he will be the house’s pillar. The oldest”.

As Buttler argued and, as the information gathered in the course of this work will show, the idea of gender as performance and not as essence, is an important foundation considered in this work. The economic rationale for wanting to have a boy or boys in the family is based on the view that they represent a net asset to parents; it is believed that “The family is better off because boys help with the income” (Mauricio, 18 years old). As Martina (19 years old) also mentioned: “I would put them [boys] to work and they could help me economically”. Furthermore, boys can “support” the mother “economically when the father dies” (Laura, 16 years old). Likewise, there is a view that teenage girls, once married, become a net asset but to the husband and in-laws, not to their nuclear family, as Guadalupe (17 years old) explained: “Girls grow up and the boyfriend steals them. Boys help more”. Or as Laura (20 years old) also stated, “Boys stay with me and help me [economically] and girls are taken away when they marry”.

Among the participants who preferred their first-born baby to be a boy, 56% of teenage girls and 62% of boys gave vague reasons related to gender aspects such as: “It is the hope/dream of a father”, “Father and son spend more time together” or “It is easier to take care of them”. However, it was interesting to notice that a third of women (34%) compared to only 11% of men, considered girls expected quality of life. These participants believe that men have a better, easier and more pleasant life than women since “they suffer” and a woman “needs more attention and has more responsibilities” as David (19 years old) stated. There is also a belief that a girl is more fragile since “they get easily sick” when they are little (Francisco, 20 years old), and that it is harder for her to “do well in life” (Victor, 20 years old). As Gerardo clearly explained:

“[I want a] boy because they have less problems. Woman’s life is harder. Since childhood they oppress her and repress her.

Men have more liberties and one doesn't worry so much about him" (Gerardo, 20 years old).

Many teenage girls' answers focus on the difficulties that young women have to face-as opposed to men- due to unplanned pregnancy:

"Boys have less problems than girls, they get them pregnant, they abandon them and they have the whole load on their shoulders" (Mirella, 16 years old).

"[Boys] are the ones who give you less problems. Daughters can get pregnant" (Irma, 17 years old).

Likewise, discourses involving *gender attributes* related to the idea that masculinity comes together with independence and invulnerability were given to explain the preference for a boy instead of a girl. As different male participants expressed: young men "can take better care of themselves once they are older" (José, 17 years old), have "greater possibilities of working and studying [than girls/young women]" (Luis, 18 years old), "It is easier to go anywhere with boys and with little girls sometimes they are not allowed in bars and restaurants" (Francisco, 19 years old) and "the man can manage better [in life] and is stronger" (Andrés, 19 years old). Teenage girls, on the other hand referred to boys/young men as having "greater possibilities to be accepted, to do whatever they want, not to suffer so much" (Lourdes, 17 years old) and to be able to "manage better [since] they are not as fragile as a woman" (Francelia, 20 years old).

When asking the teenagers who preferred to have girls, their reason for their choice, more adolescent boys than girls (57% vs. 46%) included *gender attributes*, this is to say, gendered discourses based on personality characteristics such as: "girls are more affectionate and more obedient", "girls are more tender and caring", "They cause less problems because they are calmer", "I like to dress them, comb their hair, fix them" and "girls are more loyal to their parents than boys". As Miriam clearly explained:

“Girls are more tender, one needs to care in a more intense way for girls. We will take greater care of her. They are weaker” (Miriam, 16 years old).

The rest of the participants gave more vague or unspecific answers, and therefore were categorized under *undetermined* preference for such gender (43% by teenage boys vs. 32% of young girls). They expressed views such as; “They are prettier”, “I like them better” or “With girls, marriage is nicer”.

Finally, some young girls (22%) included reasons related to the division of labour by gender (domestic/emotional work); they gave answers which considered that girls help more at home, are emotional companions or easier to communicate with and less selfish than boys.

“They are more sensitive and they take you more into consideration” (Erika, 16 years old).

“They would help me with the housework. So they learn before getting married” (María de Jesus, 14 years old).

“They are more tender. I would have a better opportunity to take care of her because boys live more for themselves than for their parents” (Cristina, 18 years old).

As this information shows, there is a clear awareness between both gender participants, of girls’ discrimination and of the disadvantages they have to face in their lives. The majority of the discourses describe them as weak individuals, less capable of being independent, having a more difficult life and less probabilities of doing well. Jacqueline (15 years old) even portrays them as “less intelligent”. Likewise, even when the choice of a girl is given, the discourses include characteristics tied to gendered dominant discourses such as fragile, tender, emotionally supportive, complaisant and loyal. Boys on the other hand, are described as tougher, with more privileges and liberties, independence, self-fulfilment and “the house’s pillar”.

Therefore, as the information shows, since they are born, boys and girls are positioned in and produced by discourses that identify them either as boys or girls rendering them “at one moment powerful and at another powerless” (Walkerdine, 1991:4). This gives us researchers, an understanding of the reasons why individuals grow-up behaving in certain ways and with a particular

self-concept shaped through those discourses available to them. It is possible to see the assumptions that people take for granted –often without questioning– in order for particular discourses to make sense and to find support from society. As post-structuralism constructionists state, biological sex is, “socially/discursively constructed” (Foucault, 1978, 1982; Butler, 1990, 1997; Davies, 1989) even before the baby is born. Here we see how these discourses actually play out before the birth through the discourses of the parents.

As the information presented shows, individuals are also shaped to be either economic or emotional providers as gendered subjects, to be strong or fragile and vulnerable, and even ‘destined’ to have a better or worse quality of life. Indeed it is important to highlight that these dominant discourses are very much supported by a contemporary Mexican reality that still nowadays, shapes dominant notions of gender and sexuality in Mexico. In recent surveys, data has shown that in Mexico, close to a third of the women have to ask permission to go out by themselves (CONAPRED 2012), four out of 10 women aged 15 and older are abused physically and psychologically by their partner and two out of 10 have received complaints due to the way they spend the money, have been forbidden to work and study or their partner has taken money or properties from them (INEGI, 2013b).

### **5.3. - Adolescent girls’ schooling and professional growth**

Associated to the former information, there was an interest to research the views, influenced by dominant discourses, that adolescents have concerning women’s professional growth (often set in a binary against motherhood and girls and women’s place in the home). When asked, “*Do you believe he [your partner] thinks that certain studies or careers don't go well with women?*” more than a third (37%) of young women answered affirmatively to this question. Likewise, when considering careers for women, ideas about physical appearance and fidelity were considered:

“Secretary is an interesting job for a woman since she dresses well and uses high heels” (Lourdes, 19 years old).

“Something that has to do with children or women. There should not be men involved because he is a very jealous man” (Ivonne, 17 years old).

What was striking in the findings is the fact that 15% of teenage girls could not think of an appropriate career for a woman to have. This percentage, together with 7% of female participants who believed a woman should stay at home, represent a fifth of teenage girls who seem to consider that a career in a woman’s life is irrelevant. As Guadalupe (17 years old) explained:

“I believe there is no career which is interesting for a woman to have if she is married since she should stay at home with her children. If she is not married, she can work as an assistant in a kitchen”.

This finding is worrisome since it shows that mainly adolescent girls, seem to show a greater resistance to change and, seem highly invested in very traditional gender discourses, including girls as future mothers without careers which operates as a barrier to gender equality.

Coming from a patriarchal society such as the Mexican, it is not surprising to find these views. When trying to find out if a “*A woman who is studying is more attractive to men than one who is not*”, the information showed that most teenage girls (67%) believe this statement to be false, while most young men (72%) did say that an adolescent girl who is studying is indeed more attractive to them than one who is not. However it is relevant to notice that not all the reasons given by teenagers -for wanting the young women to study- were directed to women’s intellectual growth and self-fulfilment. My findings show, that twice as many adolescent boys than girls (14% vs. 6%) see more educated women as sexual objects. For them, a young woman who is studying would be more attractive to men since “the study influences her personal hygiene and her manners” (Erica, 18 years old), would be sexier and the man can “show her off to his friends” (Sandra, 14 years old). A male participant explained that an educated young woman will “dress”, “smell” and “have different feelings” (Juan Carlos, 18 years old). This information shows that some of these adolescent

boys are concerned with class advantages perhaps rather than genuine gender equality in their relationships and, still relate to women as sexual objects.

Few other male participants (10%) consider education to be an enhancement of woman's role within the family. They argue that if the young woman studies she "will understand her partner more" (José, 17 years old), "She could give her son/daughter more [knowledge]" (Florentino, 20 years old) and "could help her partner support the family" (Carlos, 19 years old). For these young men education is seen as cultural capital to enhance the women's role in the family and as a mother, rather than for her own economic advantage or independence. Indeed, only one person of each sex (2%) view schooling as an avenue for women's independence and as a possibility for them to be self-sufficient.

On the other hand, those participants who rejected women' participation in schooling (15% of young women vs. 17% of men) gave reasons which focused on the importance of a woman's physical appearance and character rather than on her level of education. As Juan and Paola voiced:

"The most attractive part of a woman is her physical appearance and her way of thinking" (Juan, 17 years old).

"Because my partner says that he does not pay attention to what the woman is doing but to what she is and how she is" (Paola, 15 years old).

Another reason given by some interviewees centred on the view that education questions the gender hierarchy. Teenagers who expressed this view, believed that school or work interferes with woman's "other obligations", i.e. the housework and the care of the children and the husband/ partner. As Guadalupe, a 17 year old female participant, expressed: "If she is not studying, she can take care of him when he arrives" or as Francisco (19 years old) also mentioned: "[if they study] They leave little time for the partner and focus on their studies". Therefore this situation can only bring problems within the couple, affect men's self esteem and even cause infidelity.

“My partner felt less of a person when I was studying” (Karina, 15 years old).

“My partner would feel jealous. He might later think that I am going somewhere else” (Laura, 20 years old).

“Many women who study cheat on their partners” (Luis, 18 years old).

This information shows that education is viewed by some participants-both male and female- as enhancing the young women’s independence and autonomy which may lead to other interests, romantic partners and commitments, threatening the primacy of the male in the relationship, and challenging the form of dominant masculinity that is normal in the peer group. In addition to the threatening aspect, most teenage girls (42%) believe that young men show indifference or lack of interest in women’s level of education. Considering that the findings across this study do show that teenage girls are highly influenced by their partners’ views and opinions, this information is worrisome. Independently of the opinions concerning woman’s education, what is clear based on the answers, is that a woman cannot be better educated than a man. When researching adolescents’ views concerning man’s degree of schooling vis-à-vis woman’s the interviewees were asked, “*Do you think men should be better educated than women?*” As expected, an important percentage of both female (59%) and male (46%) believed this statement to be true. This information might be the one that is still influencing the actual schooling of young women vis-à-vis men, as seen in a survey by the INEGI which shows that among the group of people between 15 and older, women without education represent a greater percentage than men and, men have in average more school years than women in Mexico (INEGI, 2014).

Most of them (40% young women vs. 41% young men) explained their views considering gendered dominant discourses, which dictate that man’s role is to provide for his family and woman’s role is to give birth and take care of her children.

“A man should be better educated because a woman stays in her house and if he has more studies, he can look for a good job” (Lucy, 16 years old).

“The obligation to provide belongs to the man and the woman is there to take care of him, the children and the house” (Raúl, 17 years old).

What is interesting is that ideas about gender dominance were more subtle than blatant since only some teenage girls (11%) and surprisingly no young men stated that the man- besides being the provider- is also the head of the family and therefore the authority. As Susana (18 years old) explained by describing her partner as a “macho man” who says that “the man always has to wear the trousers. [Which in a figurative sense means to be in control]”. Or as Isabel (15 years old) also mentioned: “My partner is like men used to be. [He believes] the man should know more than the woman and he should be the one who gives most of the orders”. Few participants directly believed that men are superior to women (7% teenage girls vs. 5% teenage boys), as two of my male interviewees expressed:

“Because the man has to teach the woman many things. The man knows better” (Gonzalo, 20 years old).

“Because the man is a man and he ought to be more educated than the woman” (Juan, 18 years old).

However it is important to highlight that around a fourth of participants (35% female vs. 37% male) believed in woman’s right to have equal opportunities in her life and few others (6% of adolescent girls) talked about woman’s right to have the opportunity to do better by being more qualified. On the other hand, some teenage boys (12%) who agree with young women’s right to enter the labour market, related their reasons to the family’s wellbeing. They argued, that everybody benefits from having an educated woman in the family.

“Both should be educated for the sake of their children’s education” (Juan, 20 years old).

“A family depends on both [parents] and their children will depend on both” (Carlos, 18 years old).

All this information shows that, even when teenage boys and girls support the idea of an educated young woman, most of them still do it thinking about traditional gender discourses and define woman through their role within the house and family and, even when a career for women is accepted, it is gendered. Therefore, the young women's chances to grow are directly tied to her role as wife and mother, not to her autonomy as an individual with rights. This illustrates the highly unequal gendered discourses at play, since men's identity was not defined to the same degree through being a father.

Finally, among those interviewees who support equality in terms of education and preparation within the couple, few teenage boys (5%) believe this to be important in order to respect the young woman and to prevent humiliations. The lack of respect towards the young woman is believed- in this case- to arise from her being less educated or having no level of preparation for employment. As the following male participants explained:

“You would get bored. You could treat her like someone who is worth less if she is not educated like the man” (Gerardo, 19 years old).

“To avoid humiliations towards the woman. To avoid '*regañarla*' (to tell her off) outside the house or in front of other people” (Carlos, 17 years old).

As mentioned previously, while a number of adolescents –both female and male- believed women should be equality educated than men, none of them said that a woman should be better educated than him, since as half of the female interviewees' (55%) stated the fact of a young woman having a higher degree of schooling or being better educated for a job, could convey serious problems within a relationship. This information is also found in a recent survey undertaken by the INEGI (2014) in which, 23% of the women interviewed admitted that their earning more money makes their partners easily angry and 10% accepted the fact that the distress originated among men arise from “*machista*” attitudes. My interviewees identified conflicts such as arguments, fights and power struggle among the couple (59%), separation or divorce (28%)

and problems, which could affect the man's self-esteem (13%). As the following examples show:

"The partner might get angry and the couple can end up fighting, hitting each other and then leaving each other" (Lupita, 20 years old).

"Reproaches because the woman is more educated. She would constantly make her partner feel bad and she will feel she has more rights" (Esperanza, 16 years old).

"They would get angry because the woman would tell him that he shouldn't have married her if he does not know how to do anything" (Nayeli, 13 years old).

The gender discourses where the masculinity is defined through bringing in money and femininity, by being at home and making her partner feel accomplished is evident here. These arguments and difficulties between the couple were believed to happen mainly due to: 1) The man's insecurities (47%)- as Nury (17 years old) and Wendy (18 years old) explained "The man will feel less because he earns less money" and "He will feel more confident if he fully provides for the home". 2) The man's jealousy and need to be better than the woman (30%). 3) The fear that the gender hierarchy within the relation would be questioned (14%) -as Tania (14 years old) stated, "The woman would have to support him and she would end up tired of that" and, 4) By the young woman's fear of her partner leaving her the sole responsibility for providing for the family (9%) as Rocío and María commented, "the woman would complaint to the man that he is not a man, that he is not man enough to bring money to the house" (Rocío, 16 years old) and therefore "The woman could easily leave him to go with someone else if she is not happy" (María, 19 years old). Here a man earning less than the woman makes the man himself 'less' and it is argued that women would not want this situation either.

Following the same line of gender division of labour, it was interesting to notice, based on the question; "*Do you believe he [your partner] thinks that a woman should stay home with the kids?*" that more adolescent girls (52%) than boys (37%) believed this statement to be true. Summarizing the findings, it is

important to highlight that 67% of teenage girls believed that a woman who is studying is not more attractive to a man than one who is not, 42% argued that a man does not care if a woman studies, 59% mentioned that a man should be more educated than a woman, 55% believed that if they are more educated than a man, they will have problems in their relationship and 52% of them, compared to 37% of the men said a woman should stay at home with her children.

What this may tell us is that young girls are very concerned about males' point of view and are willing to accommodate the interest and desires of men ("emphasized femininity") even when these interests or desires might only be assumptions made by the teenage girls. This is considered to be so because, based on the information obtained in this research, many adolescent girls might perhaps view teenage boys as more traditional than they really are. The possible fact that young girls think boys are more sexist than they actually seem to be, might be due to the gender discourses they have assimilated and the discrimination they have suffered since childhood. On the other hand, some teenage boys may be tired of having to be in control all the time and wish the woman would share more of the power and the initiative in the relationship, although many, were not fully willing to share the domestic responsibilities. This is probably why, 48% of teenage girls and 63% of boys believe that, men do not longer think that a woman should stay at home taking care of her children. She could also work but without neglecting her duties at home. This is really important because it places the emphasis on the woman to 'do it all' (Ringrose, 2012), be successful at home and the workplace- the well-known double journey among most Mexican women, even from different socioeconomic levels - and does not challenge masculine behaviour (for instance lack of contribution to childcare) at all.

In addition to this significant difference in views, it is important to highlight that, twice as many young boys than teenage girls, were aware of the value of adolescent girls wanting to do better and become more qualified and knowledgeable individuals. These results could suggest a greater change in

views and ideas among young men compared to young women, concerning women's education and degree of preparation for future life. It also tells us that young women are very concerned about how they appear to adolescent boys and about their attractiveness to them, which is defining how they feel about their life choices (Ringrose, 2008).

There is still the limited research on Mexican couples that offers detailed analysis on how gender and sexuality is constructed through discourse (e.g., Helms, Supple and Proulx, 2011). Recent studies have shown that the broad trends of sexism found in my research persist. With isolated exceptions, Mexico is still a male-dominated society and the spirit of "*machismo*" is still very strong in many parts of the country (Rhoda and Burton, 2010). As the OECD report (April 2014) states, as of 2012 the World Economic Forum ranks Mexico 98th in equality in tertiary education enrolment, this disparity being more prevalent for girls in low-income families, since they are more likely to participate in domestic activities in the home rather than attend school. Although it is difficult to find studies that have gathered dominant discourses that accompany and even explain in part this information, these dominant trends suggest traditional discourses of gender continue; particularly around poor young girls and women's limited access to school and work opportunities.

#### **5.4. - Definitions of manhood and womanhood**

In order to support even more the information gathered that describes the dominant gender discourses shaping the lives of individuals, this research also collected different views concerning what it means to participants to be a man or a woman, as well as, their definition of a responsible man and woman, through the following questions:

"What does it mean to you to be a man?"

"What does it mean to you to be a woman?"

"How would you define a responsible man?"

"How would you define a responsible woman?"

“How do you think a man would define a responsible woman”?

“In your sex life, what does it mean to be a man?”

As expected, masculinity was associated by more than a third of male participants (37%) and more than half of young women (55%), with looking after the family and carrying out financial responsibilities:

“To look after my kids and my wife” (Francisco, 19 years old).

“[A responsible man] is the one who carry with the responsibilities at home; solve problems, is the economic provider and protects his family” (Jorge, 18 years old).

“A responsible man is one who gives me money, does not get drunk, comes home early and does not waste the money and unnecessary things” (Mariana, 18 years old).

Almost a third of young men (26%) considered psychological characteristics such as, independence, assertiveness, and a person who stands up for himself, mature, protective and respectful.

“A man who knows how to be responsible. Knows how to take care of himself and, [knows] what he is going to do” (Carlos, 19 years old).

“[To be a man is] A responsibility because you already have to think in other things; think in what you have to do in your life and not only on having a good time with your friends” (José, 17 years old).

“To know how to behave in face of the mistakes that he can make and accept them and look for solutions” (Gerardo, 19 years old).

It is important to note that all these male individuals seem to identify themselves with the more positive discourse of *Caballerismo* (Arciniega, 2008), a more positive image of a man as, responsible and honest, who recognizes his social obligations, courageous, “kind and trustworthy” (Victor, 20 years old), as well as, the family provider who respects and cares for his wife, children and his community. Likewise, although few, there are those who even challenge male violence and disagree with the gendered discourses of traditional *Machismo*

which focuses on a negative view of hyper masculinity - a man as controlling, sexist and aggressive.

“To be a man is just a word. It means that one should not beat his woman, neither should one tell her off outside the house” (Abraham, 18 years old).

“[A responsible man is] one who tries to solve the problems with words and not with fists” (Alberto, 18 years old).

However, there are still few others (15%) who share a more *machista* view- a view that the man is the one who should be the head of the household, is stronger than a woman and superior to her.

“One feels more... superior to the woman because a man can do more heavy jobs than her” (José, 17 years old).

“To be a man is something very special. To achieve things that women can't, such as sports. One can succeed in more things, in more jobs” (Alejandro, 18 years old).

“A man feels more important than the woman, like ... macho. One feels that one can manage the woman as one pleases. One feels more of a man, macho” (Luis, 19 years old).

There were other teenage boys (9%) who follow the discourses that states that manhood allowed them to have more advantages than women, i.e. more privileges, more freedom and receive less criticism from family members, partners and society in general.

“[To be a man] gives me the freedom of not being criticized for what I do, like if you have more addictions or bad habits. You have more places where you can go and you have more freedom to say bad words” (Macbeth, 20 years old).

“[To be a man means] that I can do whatever I want” (Roberto, 19 years old).

“To have greater possibilities to do better in life” (Juan Carlos, 18 years old).

It is important to note that the freedom considered here is associated to assigned traditional gender discourses that confer, explicitly or implicitly, certain privileges not given to women- a risk taking life style (use of drugs, alcohol etc.), freedom to do as they please within and outside the family home- all with the purpose to publicly prove that he is a true man and maintaining asymmetrical power within men and women's relationships.

Finally, although few, others considered their role as procreators (4%). In a patriarchal society it is frequent to encounter discourses that highlight the importance of being sexually active and able to impregnate a woman in order to be a man (Szasz, 1998b). When Victor (20 years old) was asked why a pregnancy is important for a man, his answer was: "Because that way he shows he is a man. He feels better socially speaking". When Pablo (18 years old) was asked what would happen if he could not have a child? His answer reflected a strong fear of rejection: "Society would reject me". The following discourses also show the close association between the ability to make a woman pregnant and manhood as the following participants stated:

"A man is the one who makes a woman pregnant" (Erik, 19 years old).

"What makes you a man is to be a father" (Juan, 17 years old).

On the other hand most teenage girls define womanhood, based on their roles as producing offspring and becoming mothers (32%) and their role as housewives (22%). Both gendered behaviours are understood as critical to normal female identity.

"To be a woman means that I can give my partner love and give him children" (Patricia, 20 years old).

"I can have children. To be a woman means to do woman's work that the man can't do; the housework, to cook, to iron and to do the laundry" (Olga, 19 years old).

"A woman is someone who has to clean her house, wash the husband's clothes, and take care of the children" (Laura, 18 years old).

“A responsible woman is one who carries out her duties as a wife and daughter. A woman who washes, irons and who is hard working. One who has her house clean” (Paola, 19 years old).

Likewise, 73% of teenage boys define a responsible woman based on the division of labour by gender as Adan and Alberto explained:

“A responsible woman is one who fulfils herself as a woman in the house. One who does not “*anda de chismosa*” (go on gossiping) on the street with the neighbours. One who takes care of her children and carries out her domestic duties” (Adan, 17 years old).

“A responsible woman is one who sees for the family; takes care of children, of parents and the family in general. One who thinks before acting” (Alberto, 19 years olds).

It was interesting to notice that, for 19 year old Martina, the woman’s role as unpaid labourer in the home, is seen as freer than the man’s need to provide income through paid employment.

“The woman has more freedom than the man. The man has to work a lot and the woman does not. The woman learns to cook and do the housework” (Martina, 19 years old).

Although not many, it was interesting to find that some teenage girls (13%) did articulate that womanhood should be about becoming independent and finding self-fulfilment in life. These adolescents believed in woman’s ability to take her own decisions, to be the person she wants to be, to be respected and not discriminated and to do better in life.

“[To be a woman means to] take your own decisions about your life” (Rubi, 16 years old).

“To be able to be self-sufficient and independent” (Myrna, 19 years old).

“Be oneself and see herself like such. If she does something, she does it because she wants to” (Renata, 17 years old, female participant).

“The woman should demand respect so people do not talk badly about her” (María, 15 years old teenage girl).

Few others (6%) referred to the view that women are equal and even superior to men.

“Professionally speaking a woman can be as good or even better than a man” (Bianca, 15 years old).

“It is a pride to be a woman. There are people that classify women as people who do not know how to do things. This is not true. We can be better than men” (Martha, 17 years old).

However, 5% of the teenagers did see the fact of being a woman as something that places them at a disadvantage with respect to men. The female participants who believe this to be true, explained their views by saying that women have to go through life with more sacrifices and limitations than men and, have more responsibilities.

“As a woman you cannot do what a man does because it is not well seen in a woman” (Elizabeth, 19 years old).

“At work people see you as less capable than men” (Selene, 19 years old).

To other adolescent girls, to be a woman is associated with receiving more attention and compliments from people, especially men (4%), having gendered physical characteristics (3%) such as being feminine, delicate and attractive and, being more vulnerable (3%); emotionally weaker than a man, needing to take special care of her reputation and at greater risk of being sexually abused. Finally it is worth highlighting that there were female participants (9%) who did not know, or did not know how to explain what it meant to them to be women while, few others (3%), believed there was nothing special about being a woman. This is sad because all these discourses and attitudes reflect the impact of discrimination that some Mexican teenagers face while they grow up; a discrimination that makes them believe they are less than a man, that their value relies on their physical appearance, their virginity, their ability to take care of children, the husband/partner and the house, not worth the investment of being sent to school above a certain grade and, if they work, their job and their economic contribution are rarely as important as men's. This information is relevant to the central point of this work since many young women seem to

have found that in order to establish themselves as women with rights, there is a need to have children and have a man next to them. This together with Connell's (1987) described form of "emphasized femininity" -where a compliance with the subordination is evident by accommodating the interest and desires of men- contributes to their vulnerability.

## **5.5. - Conclusion**

The findings presented in this chapter indicate a clear awareness of the disadvantages girls undergo because of their gender. The preference for a boy predominates among the participants -especially among young men- if they are faced with the possibility of having only children of the same sex. Among the different arguments for this choice were the worse quality of life expectation for girls -often related to unplanned pregnancies and the possibility of being left alone with this "problem"- the difficulty of reaching independence and their vulnerability vis-à-vis men's. The choice for a girl was associated to the view that girls help more at home, are emotionally closer to the mother and there is a greater control over them.

The findings also show some contradictions in perceptions about gender, but offer important insights into the type of gender dominant discourses of *macho* masculinity and maternal femininity that may contribute to unplanned pregnancies in this context. Although an important percentage of teenage boys and girls seem to have been able to fight against the normative traditional gender discourses imposed on them, there are still many, more teenage girls than boys, who as Davison and Frank (2006:152) state, uncritically engage in 'discourses of the self' to regulate their own behaviour and construct a sense of feminine and masculine identity (Foucault, 1980) that seems to 'make sense' and fit what is being demanded of them. Likewise, as Colombo et al. (2012) recently also found, although most of their interviewees talked about gender equality in sexual division of labour, when being more specific they expressed that the greater responsibility ought to be expected from the man because he "should" be the provider.

The belief that there are “men’s” jobs or that the woman’s first duty is to her family, still predominates in many participants’ ambivalent views, which question how far women’s professional growth can reach. Likewise, many teenage girls seemed to view gender equality as potentially threatening men and recognized the men’s desire to have a woman who pleases them and fulfils particular roles of caring wife and mother in the family. Most female participants were worried that young women’s degree of education would lead to fights, arguments and power struggles that could provoke violence or lead to separation or divorce. This is believed to be so, mainly due to the man’s insecurities and jealousy, his low self-esteem, his fear of losing a hierarchical position and his anxiety of being cheated.

For these respondents, as has been also observed in other researches, the basic patriarchal family organization is organised through gender binary constructs -with instrumental tasks such as, earning money through work- the province of the male and, emotional tasks -such as nurturing, building and maintaining relationships, and childrearing- the province of the female (Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Stern, 2007; Bustos, 2009). This then leads to particular constructs of normative gender and ideal and desirable masculinity and femininity.

Since men are the ones who will provide income, there seems not be a reasonable explanation for women’s education above a certain grade (usually from middle school to high school). It was not surprising to find that few participants still believe that a man is superior to a woman and should have ultimate control over her, the children and the home. Teenage girls, on the other hand, were aware of expectations that they should want roles as mothers and housewives, although some challenged these discourses by expressing that a woman should have the right and chance to do better and have equal opportunities and acknowledging woman’s capacity and intelligence.

It is worth mentioning that, although a high percentage of both teenage girls and boys approve the woman’s freedom to study and do better in life, very few

female participants were studying and none of them were working, at the time of the interview. Therefore, to some degree, these responses reflect on various types of fantasies about gender and, the idea that young women could pursue careers and gain respect, is largely undercut by the material conditions, which make education and employment difficult (Alldred and David, 2007). Likewise, although a significant percentage of participants -more teenage boys than girls- believe that men do no longer think that a woman should stay at home and take care of her children, they sustain this is so, only if she does not neglect her duties at home. Considering these views, it was not unexpected to find that just few teenage girls -less than a fifth of them- define womanhood in terms of independence and self-fulfilment and even fewer, view women as equal or superior to men.

The specific roles, responsibilities, and obligations associated with being a woman or a man- defined by Mexican society- are still governed largely by gender dominant discourses. These discourses are organised around a binary and hierarchical construction where masculinity is superior to femininity and roles are clearly demarcated according to private and public spheres (Connell, 1987; Pateman, 1988). As Davison and Frank (2006) state, “the naturalization of inequities is learned, replicated and supported by discourses that are historical products, but are assumed to be ‘common sense’ prescriptions for living” (2006:154). Therefore, since the discourses of the self are assumed to be ‘common sense’, the teenagers have difficulty dealing with behaviours, which are different from the dominant gender expectations. This is why there is a strong tendency to end up reproducing many of these gender norms.

As mentioned previously, information found in different surveys in which, psychological and sexual abuse is present, as well as the prohibition on the man’s part to allow the young woman to go out (CONAPRED 2012) to work, to study and even to handle not only the couples’ finances but even her own money and properties (ENDIREH, 2011), reveals a clear need for better understandings of gender and sexism around pregnancy in Mexico. Likewise, the information in this chapter contributes to the understanding of how young

people's attitudes are shaped toward sexual relationship and pregnancy. It strongly supports the gender discourses that limit women's opportunities to success and do better in life by confining them to the home and the care of children, by describing them as fragile, less capable to be successful and independent and even as less intelligent.

## CHAPTER VI. - MEXICAN TEEN'S CONCEPTIONS OF SEXUALITY AND CONTRACEPTION

### 6.1. - Introduction

Social and cultural processes not only define what men and women are, but what sort of relationships they do or should develop between them. Gender is an important element to consider in sexuality and in the use of contraception, since it plays out, once again, in an array of ways in the sexual lives of Mexican teenagers. As mentioned previously in Chapter I, Mexico seems to have two nations; one that is successfully achieving modernization in more developing areas of the country (such as the country's capital from which the sample of this study was obtained) and another one, that is staying behind in all aspects related to sexual and reproductive health. However as this work shows- even in the areas that are achieving more modernization- there is a clear double standard toward sexual behaviour and sex discourses that is limiting and oppressive to women (Díaz et al. 2010; Juárez et al. 2010; Schiavon, R. 2008; Sierra et al. 2007).

Sexuality and the use of birth control methods tend to be two of the intimate areas where masculine dominance manifests itself in a clear way, and therefore, presents more resistance to change. The discourses of a sexual reputation differ according to gender -a positive attribute for a man can be deeply negative for a woman, as this chapter will show. Likewise, the same sexual attitudes, desires and behaviours by men and by women have different meanings and discourses.

The information included in this chapter refers to the views, meanings and discourses Mexican adolescents have regarding sexuality and family planning methods. It covers the discourses about appropriateness of sexual activity depending on gender, about premarital sexual experience for men and women and about the importance of sex by gender. This chapter also presents the

accepted roles each man and woman is expected to play in sexuality and use of contraception, based on traditional gender discourses often strongly influenced by hetero-normativity. This term is an aspect of ideal masculinity and femininity and categorizes individuals into two distinct genders (man and woman) with natural roles in life and discloses the expectations, demands and constraints constructed when heterosexuality is considered as normative within a society (Chambers, 2005). As my findings will show, heterosexuality is still consistently reproduced across my sample and any attempt to move away from or against dominant gender discourses is usually socially judged.

The information will be presented considering three main categories; the dominant discourses in the construction of male sexuality, the dominant discourses in the construction of female sexuality and the discourses based on equity in sexuality.

## **6.2. - Dominant discourses in the construction of male sexuality**

As different studies have shown, men are socialized to be 'masculine' in ways that are culturally appropriate. As a result of family, social, and peer influences, sex is seen as a desired goal for adolescent men and linked to their developing concept of masculinity, Sex is considered as an induction into manhood; establishing masculinity, expressing virility and building self-esteem (Medrano, 1994; Weiss and Rao Gupta, 1998; Sternberg 2000; Szasz, 2006; Giordano *et al.* 2010). The more frequently young men have intercourse, sometimes the more risks they take (Chávez, 1999) and the more partners they have the more of a man they become (Szasz, 1998a; Amuchástegui, 1999).

### **6.2.1. - Manhood and Sexual performance**

Since sex is a positive and unquestionable step to manhood for many Mexican and *Latino* teenage boys, being able to achieve intercourse becomes an empowering action of symbolic and physical importance for them. Through their

sexual performance, young men's identity as competent sexual people is confirmed, as Juan and Daniel explained:

"Due to the social beliefs, due to the '*machismo*.' The more sex you have, the more of a man you are" (Juan, 17 years old).

"One always wants to sleep around with every woman. This makes one feel very much of a man" (Daniel, 18 years old).

Based on these discourses, it was not surprising to find that when asking the adolescent boys, what it meant for them to be a man sexually speaking, almost a third of them (28%) based their answers on traditional *machista* discourses, which centred on their sexual performance- the importance of having an erection, achieving penetration and impregnating a woman. As José and Victor explained, these sexual behaviours are often considered the most valuable forms of male sexual expression:

"[To be a man sexually speaking is] To throw out semen and to have intercourse" (José, 17 years old).

"To be a man is to be someone who can procreate a child" (Victor, 18 years old).

Therefore, not being a sexually active man brings consequences that can automatically damage a teenager's reputation; "People start calling him a sissy" (Alicia, 20 years old). Likewise, peer teasing is frequent if a young man has not ever had sex (Hawkins and Meshesha, 1994; Holland *et al.* 1998) creating a need for them to fabricate lies and exaggerate their sexual knowledge and "record", to hide their lack of experience (Szasz, 1998a). Hence sex, as few teenagers (3% of young women and 8% of men) expressed in this research, gives young men the opportunity to "cultivate a reputation" (Maxwell, 2007) by allowing them to feel integrated into their social group:

"Because one is a machista. A big-mouthed. After having sex, a man talks to his friends about it and brags and brags about it" (Juan Carlos, 18 years old).

### 6.2.2. - Male superiority

The traditional “macho” dominant discourses that describes men as controlling and sexist -by promoting power relations and inequities in sexuality- was also considered by some male participants (16%) to describe a man sexually speaking. These interviewees believed that their sexual manhood has to do with being superior to the woman; this is to say, being the one who sexually dominates her and controls the sexual act. As the following teenagers explained:

“During sex, one feels that one is more important than the woman. One feels that one can handle the woman as one wishes to” (Antonio, 19 years old).

“To be the one who puts the conditions, such as if we want to do it [have sex] or not” (Marcelín, 18 years old).

“[To be a man sexually speaking means] To be superior to a woman. To be superior in a way that one should be better than her. One should feel better than the woman in a way that one would be able to sexually dominate her” (Andrés, 19 years old).

It is interesting to notice, the “we” in Marcelín’s answer that apparently considers a mutual decision but really refers to his own and his power to control. However, though few, some teenage girls (2%) identify power relations during intercourse, which could end up in violence and/or abandonment; “men often force their partners to have sex” (Teodora, 16 years old) and “if after they force them to have sex, and they don’t, women can be rejected” (Martha, 16 years old). As Schiavon (2008) explains, in certain contexts -such as the one studied in this work- there is still a difficulty to recognise women as subjects with rights, with the capacity to decide about their own bodies as well as their sexuality, and not as objects that they [men] possess.

### 6.2.3. - Man as provider of information an initiator

Sexual expertise has also been found to be a desired goal for adolescent men's concept of masculinity (Alldred and David, 2007). The more knowledge they are able to offer, as is expected from them sexually speaking, the more of a man they become. When the interviewees were asked if *"Is it important that men have more sexual experience than women when they reach marriage"*, around a third of teenage interviewees (26% of females and 33% of males) answered in an affirmative way, arguing that his greater knowledge and experience will allow him to "tell the woman how to do it [sex] and teach her" (Luis, 18 years old). Likewise, as Fausto (17 years old) stated, "If the man is more experienced he can use contraceptives and will know how to have sex and not harm the woman." Finally, Elizabeth (19 years old) believed the man should be more sexually experienced because he "will support her, will help her and will explain her how to have sex if she does not know."

There were also teenage girls who relied on the man to take the responsibility to prevent or face a pregnancy, as did Janet (18 years old) who argued that a man should be more sexually experienced because that way "he already knows how to stand up to the problem of making his partner pregnant". Likewise, Rocío (16 years old) stated that by knowing more about sex the man "can guide me on how to take care of myself and not get pregnant". These discourses show how these young women are willing to be sexually available but not sexually in charge of themselves. These dominant discourse- which positions the male figure as the person from whom a woman learns about sexuality and, as the provider of information and experience- is accentuated as the values of purity and honour for teenage girls and, performance and expertise for young men, are strongly internalized (Pitanguy and De Mello E Souza, 1997; Geldstein and Pantelides, 1997; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Szasz, 1998b, 2006). It is worth noticing that, although few (12%), there were some adolescent boys who justify the need for man's greater sexual experience, by arguing that it helps the couple and especially the young women, to reach sexual satisfaction. Marco Antonio (19 years old) and Rafael (20 years old) explained: "The

experience will allow the man to sexually satisfy the woman” and “make her happy”. These discourses are based on traditional stereotypical attitudes that describe young women as virgins, naïve and sexually passive (Medrano, 1994; Sternberg, 2000) and, as individuals who are in a subordinated position in relationship to men, constrained by the limitations of reputable femininity (Lactuo Fabros *et. al.* 1998; Szasz, 1998b, 2006) and deprived of sexual knowledge and agency.

When asked “*Who should take the initiative to have sex?*” almost a third of adolescent boys (28%) believed the man should, due to his greater need and desire to have sex with a woman. They argued that men are more sexually “inflamed” or get more easily aroused and therefore, they should be the ones to engage the woman. As Gabriel explained:

“It is easier for the man to feel aroused and it is more difficult for the woman. The man therefore has to help in that aspect” (Gabriel, 18 years old).

Two other discourses provided to explain why the man should take the initiative, were related to “entrenched gendered sexuality” (Tolman, 2002:119) and the awareness of the well known double standard- still found nowadays as other studies have shown (Stern, 2007; Schiavon, 2008; García *et al.* 2010)- that enable young women to take a more assertive stand during intercourse. On one hand, almost a fifth of young men (19%) argued that young women are socially criticized and considered sluts or easy women if they take the initiative to have sex, as the following young men stated:

“The woman looks for sex but does not show it because she fears being considered ‘*una cualquiera*’ (a slut)” (Angel, 15 years old).

“The man should take the initiative because often, one as a man thinks bad things. One thinks that the woman is offering herself to you if she takes the initiative” (Ernesto, 19 years old).

“It is not a woman’s place. People think badly if it is the woman who starts” (David, 19 years old).

Other teenage boys (17%), referred to what gender expectations and dominant discourses dictate and how it is their role to initiate sex.

“It has become like a rule that the man is the one who starts talking about having intercourse” (Bishar, 19 years old).

“Both should agree but the man is the one who has to be the initiator. To a man, it would be a shame if a woman asked for sex first” (Luis, 18 years old).

#### **6.2.4. - Masculine Hyper sexuality**

Based on gender differences in sexuality, it was not surprising to find the importance given to masculine hyper-sexuality to explain many aspects of teenagers' sexual lives. Within this term “masculine hyper-sexuality” I intend to include the dominant discourses -also found in other studies- which describe men as “burgeoning sexual beings” with “ranging hormones”, compelled to act on their sexual desires (Tolman, 2002:5) and with a sexuality often governed by an uncontrollable instinct (Sternberg, 2000; Giordano *et al.* 2009).

In this research, hyper-sexuality was a common discourse to explain different sexual behaviours such as; the naturalness of male premarital sex (mentioned by 9% of teenage girls and 15% of boys), the greater importance of sex for men (used by 33% of women and 25% of men), the lack of sexual interest for women (10% teenage girls and 20% of boys), the relevance of male premarital sexual experience (5% of teenage girls) and the male responsibility to initiative sex (28% of teenage boys).

“For the man, one of the things his body needs is to ejaculate” (Soraida, 19 years).

“It is something natural that the body asks for” (Silvia, 19 years old).

“Men are more physically prone to have a faster sexual arousal” (Carlos, 17 years old).

“[Men have premarital sex] for their pleasure. Because, in a way, they have to do it” (Rogelio, 20 years old).

“Sex is the only thing that satisfies men” (Tania, 14 years old).

It was interesting to notice that when asked: “*Who is usually less interested in having sex?*” there were few adolescents (7% teenage boys and 2% of girls) who expressed that men are. However, when asking for their reasons, most of the explanations showed that this lack of interest was considered once married and limited to the wife. As Héctor (19 years old) explained; “It is unusual that a man devotes himself to just one woman” and therefore and as Macbeth (20 years old) mentioned; “After a while of being married, the man shows less interest because he is never sure of what he does and, after some time, he starts thinking about other women”. Yet it is worth mentioning, that many Mexican men do not consider themselves unfaithful when no emotions are involved in their sexual relations (Szasz, 1998b; 2006), a perception that would be less likely to be found with women (Amuchástegui, 1999; Holland *et al.* 1998). All these answers suggest the fact that having to be faithful due to the union or marriage, takes away the excitement to have sex and therefore, men start looking for sexual satisfaction elsewhere. These discourses clearly reflect the double standard existing due to social constructions of gendered sexuality that produce male’s privilege and female’s oppression.

### **6.2.5. - Reputation and performance of male sexuality**

As mentioned previously, teenage boys are not only allowed but are expected to have premarital sex and will be socially criticized if they don’t. Man’s sexual reputation is an important theme of dominant discourses in the construction of male sexuality (Nayak and Kehily, 1997; Szasz, 2006; Hirsch *et al.* 2007; Alldred and David, 2007; Banda González, 2012). In this study, when asked: “*Do you consider natural for a man to have sex before marriage?*” 21% of teenage girls and 22% of boys, considered premarital sex for men as a natural behaviour since it allows the young man to build a good sexual reputation. This way, he will be able to perform as expected and “he will not be so ignorant

when he gets married” (Samuel, 17 years old). This shows how the gender identity- as post-structuralism states- is constructed as the individual interacts with different significant practices within popular texts. Therefore, it is discursively and culturally constructed. The risk of not performing as expected by heterosexual norms, as Butler calls it “compulsory performance”, brings with it disapproval and even “ostracism” (Butler, 1991:24).

Although many teenage participants identify the sexual double standard and even take a critical perspective on it- by refusing to comply with a construction of girls as not having desires of their own, or not acting on them- the entrenched gendered female sexuality prevails, as found in different studies along the years (Lamas, 2003; Szasz, 2006; Giordano F. *et al.* 2009; Colombo *et al.* 2012). A young man is allowed to have sex without being sanctioned because, as Erica (18 years old) stated; “The man can have sex because he is a man and can do as he pleases”. Likewise, Lupita (20 years old) added that:

“Men have greater freedom, they don’t view sex as something bad. For a woman, to have the freedom to have sex as men do is not socially acceptable”.

As these discourses show - although adolescent girls might criticise the existing double standard- they are not able to simply reject it. They are adolescents who could not challenge the traditional styles of functioning, both in their family of origin and their society, as Colombo *et al.* (2012) also found in their study. As Climent (2013) mentions “empowerment” -needed for rupture of gendered expectations and roles, - “is a process that happens in stages, which comes and goes, without a definitive finish line” (2013:21). In addition to this, men have another advantage, even when his partner would expect him to be a virgin, there is no way of knowing. Therefore, he can easily lie about it, as Tania and Liliana explained:

“When women have sex before marriage, her partner thinks that she has been with many men. It is not the same for men. With the man, since one does not know if he is a virgin or not, there is no problem” (Tania, 16 years old).

“With men you never know. They can tell you that they have not had intercourse and maybe they have” (Liliana, 15 years old).

As Holland *et al.* also found (1998), these discourses show how many young women are aware of the unequal social consequences regarding the expression of their sexuality. Although some strongly disagreed and highlighted the disadvantage their bodies offer as opposed to man’s -in the identification of virginity- many gave in and accepted them as part of reality. As Schiavon (2008) also noticed, although virginity has been and still is more and more toned down, the conditions that originated it and made its existence comprehensible, have not been radically transformed in many contexts. As this research also shows. it is still considered as something that it is given away or a treasure to be offered.

The view that it is ‘natural’ for a man to have to take advantage and have as much sex as possible before getting tied to one woman, was also mentioned by some teenagers in this research when considering premarital sex. Alejandro (18 years old) explained that “it is the man’s ideology; before getting married you have to live and have sex” and, as Héctor (19 years old) also commented “every man wants to have intercourse. They want to live their lives before getting married”. These discourses reflect the unmentioned but clearly implicit supposition that girls are the objects of teenage boys’ sexual desire and, as Tolman (2002) also shows in her book *Dilemmas of Desire*, some adolescent boys have a sense that they are entitled to satisfy their own sexual desires or wishes, even if it means taking advantage -psychologically or physically- of teenage girls. Therefore, while teenage boys “profit” from their bachelorhood without any social repercussion, those girls with whom they have sex “just for fun” loose their “eligibility for social [...] protection against sexual harm” (Tolman and Higgins in Tolman 2012:12) and become “bad” girls who experience shame around their sexuality and are constructed as deserving condemnation and even sexual violence.

### **6.2.6. - Sex as a criterion for a stable relationship**

Although many teenage participants agree with Olga (19 years old) and Lupe (18 years old) that teenage boys “get pleasure from sex regardless who they have it with” and that they “look more for the pleasure than to do it for love”, there were almost five times more teenage boys than girls (14% boys and 3% of girls) who approved sex before marriage for a man-not to satisfy their sexual urges or prove their manhood- but to get to know their partners better or “seal” the relationship. Hence, premarital sex for these participants, allows the man to make the right choice and be with a young woman who really loves him as Marcellín (18 years old) explained; “Often, the ‘proof of love’ is asked for. If the woman has sex with her partner, it is because she does love him”.

It is important however, to highlight that these discourses are considered when the young woman is a “potential” candidate for marriage and not when she is just regarded as a sexual conquest, who will reaffirm the man’s manhood, as José (20 years old) voiced: “You can have sex with other women because during adolescence one does many things. With your partner it would be different, it would be to know her better”. This view was also found in a recent study by Rojas-Solís and Flores (2013) in which young men visualize the erotic aspects within informal relationships while the formality of the “noviazgo” (dating period) is characterized by respect, love understanding and honesty.

It was interesting to find however, that regardless of the dominant discourses that promote and encourage sex among teenage boys, there were participants who believed that it is not “natural” for a man to have pre-marital sex. Although discourses about male virginity before marriage are scarce in a patriarchal society- such as the Mexican- there were around a fifth of both teenage girls (19%) and boys (22%) who expressed that male virginity is a very important aspect of the relationship.

“If you are going to get married, you will have sex with someone whom you respect, you love and to whom you will give everything” (Alberto, 19 years old).

Some of the reasons given were however, related to fear of the woman's reaction and not to a rejection per se of premarital sex, as Pablo and Ernesto's answers show.

"If the woman finds out [the man has had sex], she thinks that that is the only thing he is looking for" (Pablo, 17 years old).

"Because if your partner finds out [that you are not virgin] there might be arguments" (Ernesto, 20 years old).

### **6.3. - Dominant discourses in the construction of female sexuality**

Social expectations around girls and woman's sexuality have been constructed in binary opposition and thus, as naturally different from boys and men despite these being socially and culturally constructed norms. In many cultures young women face tremendous social pressure to maintain an image of virginity and innocence regardless of the true extent of their knowledge or sexual experience. 'Honest' women should not have opinions on what they want in sex: it is up to the man to know how to please them (Sternberg, 2000). Therefore any practice or discourse, which admits her sexual knowledge, allows young woman's sexual pleasure, values her performance or grants her control, categorizes her as a loose woman (Szasz, 1998, 2006; Amuchástegui, 1999; Schiavon, 2008). As Holland *et al.* have also observed:

"Young women must manage their appearance very carefully in order to stay on the right side of the slippery boundary between being acceptably attractive and overly sexualised" (Holland *et al.* 1998: 111).

#### **6.3.1. - Meaning of sex for young women**

In relation to norms of femininity therefore, the meaning involved in intercourse is very different from ideas of masculinity. Studies have found that while demonstrations of sexual performance play a very important role in the affirmation of masculine identity, what is important for women's sense of adult

femininity is built around making and maintaining relationships with others (especially men). Women's fulfilment is gained through the relationship and in giving men pleasure, and only secondarily through their own bodily desires or in communicating with their partner about shared pleasure (Miller, 1986; Holland *et al.* 1998; Petchesky, 1998; Cervantes, 2005; Vilela Borges and Nakamura, 2009; García *et al.* 2010; Banda González, 2012). The results in this research confirm these findings.

When studying the adolescents' discourses concerning the circumstances under which sexual intercourse can take place, through questions such as the following: "*Do you consider that intercourse should only happen when there is love involved?*" and "*Do you think that intercourse can happen just to derive pleasure?*" most of teenage girls (91%) compared to 64% of young men, mentioned love as an essential requisite to have sex, attaching a significant emotional commitment to it. As Erika (17 years old) and Karina (15 years old) respectively explained: "The woman is more sensitive, she has a need to feel loved" and "she only has sex when she loves someone". Some teenage girls also argued that young women are less interested in sex and more interested in love and connection: "A woman doesn't need to have sex to know that she is loved" (Selene, 19 years old) or as Lucy (16 years old) explained, "What is most important for me is that he loves me for what I am and not because of sex."

### **6.3.2. - Discourses of female repression**

Many of the discourses found in this study describe women-especially in the area of sexuality- as passive, dependent and deeply influenced by gender roles and expectations. Although there is an intention to recognize them as sexual beings, there are always dominant discourses that interfere significantly with these attempts. For example when asked; "*To who is having sex more important?*" while more than half of both teenage girls (52%) and boys (65%) expressed that sex is as important to men as it is to women, when they were asked: "*Who is usually less interested in having sex?*" most of them (87% of

female and 86% of male) indicated that it is the woman. This response shows how sexist discourses are internalized (Uhlmann and Uhlmann, 2005) and hard to break (Colombo et al. 2012). Moreover almost twice as many adolescent girls (49%) than boys (25%), supported the repression of young women, by arguing that they are less interested in sex because; “We don’t really like it” (Maricela, 18 years old), “The woman doesn’t need sex as much as the man. We are fine by just having him near us” (Mireilla, 16 years old), “Women don’t really fancy sex as much. One time is enough for them. Am I right?” (Renata, 17 years old), “It is not something essential in their lives” (Elizabeth, 18 years old), “It is really the same for her if she has sex or not” (Mariela, 18 years old) and “The more the woman does it, the less she becomes interested in sex” (Julieta, 18 years old). All these discourses are strongly gendered, offering rationalizations with a common denominator; sex is a male thing.

The lack of sexual pleasure, was also mentioned as a reason for young women’s lack of interest in sex, as Guadalupe (16 years old) explained; “A woman doesn’t fancy sex, because there are times that she doesn’t experience any pleasure.” This inability to enjoy sex is judged by the fact- or so it is said- that “the woman has less sexual desire than the man” (Selene, 18 years old); “it is more difficult for a woman to get sexually aroused while men get easily excited” (Claudia, 16 years old) and “A woman does not have the facility to reach pleasure with a man, as the man can with a woman” (Cristina, 18 years old). Alarmingly, some teenage girls seem to view sex only just as an event that allows some “physical relief” like when the man ejaculates. Jenny (16 years old), Luz and Argentina (both 17 years old) explained that, through her menstrual period, a woman reaches her sexual “relief”. As all these quotes show -as well as Tolman (2002) has found- acknowledgment of these teenage girls’ sexual longing is practically non-existent and their experience of themselves as sexual beings, is left out. As this author writes: “We have effectively desexualized girls’ sexuality, substituting the desire for relationship and emotional connection for sexual feelings in their bodies” (2002:5).

Adolescent boys on the other hand, agreed with some dominant discourses that support the repression of teenage girls. They mentioned that “the woman just needs sex once a month” (Omar, 18 years old) and that “generally it is not the greatest thing for her, since sex is not something that is fundamental in her life” (Juan, 17 years old).

Following the same line, there were other teenage girls (5%) and boys (7%) who argued that woman’s lack of interest in sex is due to their personality. Based again in dominant discourses, they claimed that women are more discreet, introverted, demure, calmer, shier, reserved and colder than men. Rafael (20 years old) for example, stated that “the woman is sexually shier and would never be as open minded as the man is”. These discourses disclose the way social constructions of gendered sexuality and norms of femininity control in tandem these teenagers’ sexuality and sexual experiences. These results support Holland *et al.* (1998) findings in their book “*The Male in the Head*”, where they mentions that much of the feminine language available for communication about sexuality, is both gendered, limited and constituted in silences.

### **6.3.3. - Risk of pregnancy and /or diseases**

This study also found that the danger of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, “lurk in the shadows of sexual act” (Tolman, 2002:10). These fears were used by some teenagers (15% girls and 23% boys) to explain women’s lack of interest in sex and, why sex is not a normal behaviour for unmarried young women (6% of adolescent girls and 1% of boys).

“The least intercourse the woman has, the better for her. She avoids many problems this way, problems such as a pregnancy” (Lourdes, 17 years old).

“The woman is not so much interested in sex maybe because she is worried about getting pregnant or catching a disease or an infection” (Teodora, 16 years old).

“Before marriage, the woman is less interested in sex because she does not want to ruin her life or cut it [due to a pregnancy]” (Macbeth, 20 years old).

In addition to the fear of a pregnancy, the anxiety of having to deal with it by themselves is also present in some of the female participants' minds since, as Osvaldo and Freddy stated, it is not uncommon that the consequences of an unplanned pregnancy tend to fall solely on the woman:

“It is the woman who has to be careful of not getting pregnant because she is the one who ends up ‘carrying the package’ [meaning the responsibility of the born child]” (Osvaldo, 18 years old).

“The woman has to take care of herself to not to get pregnant. It is shameful for a woman since the man can leave her and she stays pregnant” (Freddy, 17 years old).

Considering these discourses it is not surprising to find that almost twice as many young women (35%) than men (17%), referred to the fear of unplanned pregnancy to explain why sex is enjoyed more when using family planning methods. However, it is important to mention that some teenage boys (2%) voiced that a woman is less interested in sex because of erroneous beliefs of what intercourse can do to their bodies. Cuauhtémoc (18 years old) stated; “Some women believe their uterus wears away. They feel bad. They think that each time they come they get consumed from inside.” Therefore, from Cuauhtémoc's point of view, a woman could think that; the more sex a man has, the more of a man he is. The more sex a woman has, the less of a woman she becomes since her reproductive organs get damaged.

#### **6.3.4. - Risk of loss of girls' reputation: Discourses about Premarital Virginity**

Studies in Mexico (Amuchástegui, 1999; Szasz, 1998a, 2006; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Schiavon, 2008; García *et al.* 2010) and Latin American countries (Sternberg, 2000; Medrano, 1994; Hawkins and Meshesha, 1994) have found that a predominance of cultural constructs is that teenage girls should be pure, chaste and easily malleable. Male authority over female sexual activity is

reflected in the importance of women being virgins when starting a relationship and before getting married. Virginity is, therefore, a fundamental condition to women's social status and a high value is placed on it before marriage.

The following quotes exemplify, as Tolman also found in her study, "the cacophony of voices that swirl in girls' minds" (2002:94), revealing how often adolescent girls are bombarded with messages about the importance of their virginity and the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases- "messages that ring in their ears even though they have already had sex" (Tolman, 2002:94). These messages come from their family, their society and their church and they constantly warn them that, by losing their virginity teenage girls risk losing their value, their dignity, the respect of society and even their purity. As Pope Francisco recently expressed, when inviting young people to understand and value the importance of purity and virginity, that virginity is a sacrament "of Christian initiation and a source of life of the church" (Ledesma Solórzano, 2014).

An unmarried woman has therefore to be sexy but not sexual (Valenti, 2008). As an example mentioned by Valenti in her article in "The Nation", an abstinence teacher explained to the young women in his class, "that women are like wrapped lollipops, and that after having sex they are nothing more than 'poorly wrapped, saliva-fouled suckers'" (2009: single page). "The purity myth" described by this author as "the lie that sexuality defines how 'good' women are, and that women's moral compasses are inextricable from their bodies" contributes to women's vulnerability and is even "an integral part of rape culture" (Valenti, 2008:310). The loss of purity for most of my participants was closely connected with the young woman's value, respect and social reputation, as the following teenage girls explained:

"Because the man doesn't lose anything and the woman does lose her dignity if she is not virgin. The woman loses her virginity and if she ever marries, the man notices that she is not worth it anymore" (Janet, 18 years old).

“The woman is worth more if she is a virgin. She deserves more respect and she will not have it [respect] if she has sex before marriage” (Guadalupe, 14 years old).

Elizabeth (19 years old) expressed that sometimes the woman not only has to deal with the pregnancy by herself, but many people believe she deserves it; “if the woman ends up pregnant and her partner does not support her, people would say that she asked for it.” This discourse is a clear example of how fragile a young woman’s reputation is.

Virginity is also considered by some teenage girls (16%) a “weapon” for men to exercise power over them. In this case the “purity myth” also leads to the possibility of rejection and abandonment, as Clara mentioned:

“Many men just want one thing from us; to have sex. That is why a woman has to be careful since once they get what he wants [sex] he can walk away from the relation” (Clara, 16 years old).

On the other hand, Sonia and Jazmín- as some other teenagers- are operating under the entrenched moral code of appropriate sexual behaviour for “good” Catholic adolescents (Amuchástegui, 1999), which categorize premarital sex as something bad that “makes you dirty”.

“Because it is better to have sex for the first time when one gets married. Because that way, we will both be ‘clean’” (Sonia, 16 years old).

“Women have to arrive ‘clean’ to their marriage” (Jazmín, 18 years old).

Teenage girls do not only lose their value and dignity but are perceived as promiscuous and “easy women” if they have premarital sex, or if they take an active stand in the sexual relationship. Many young women in Mexico, strongly influenced by dominant discourses, believe that the demonstration of sexual knowledge, desire and pleasure, as well as, the wish or intention to initiate sexual activity, is the man’s terrain (Szasz, 1998b, 2006; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998). When asking; “*Is it better that women have more sexual experience than men?*” it was not surprising to find that a strong majority of female (92%)

and male (87%) adolescents, disagreed with this possibility. Likewise, if the woman ever feels like initiating sex, she could not only be described as someone who “es una lanzada” (throws and offers herself to men) (Lupita, 16 years old) but could also damage her partner’s reputation, as Edgar explained:

“It is better that the man attracts the woman. This would be the expected behaviour from the man. It is not woman’s role to initiate sex because if she does, people would think badly about her and about the man” (Edgar, 17 years old).

The value of virginity for young women was found to be fundamental in the discourses of female participants, although their behaviour did not always square with their views. In Mexican and *Latino* cultures, female sexuality is framed consistently as entirely passive and submissive (Comas-Díaz, 1987; Amuchástegui, 1999; Climent, 2013). A teenage girl who has premarital sex may not be respected, may receive negative gossip and could be strongly censured by her family and society (Medrano, 1994; Schiavon, 2008).

In this research, those teenagers who did not agree with women having premarital sex (19% of adolescent girls vs. 22% of boys) believed that there is a great chance that the man would not marry them anymore, would abandon them or lose respect for them, if they are not virgins as the following adolescent stated:

“Men look for virgin women to get married to” (Juan, 17 years old).

“If the man has sex before marriage, he already got what he wanted. He does not respect you anymore and perhaps he decides not to get married afterwards” (Yuri, 16 years old).

It is interesting to see that some adolescent girls (4%) argued that it is not “normal” for men to have sex before marriage, but gave reasons that concerned just women and their virginity vis-à-vis men or society. Likewise, a few adolescent girls (2%) perceived a conflict between women as sexual beings and the social control that exists over them. They argued that society “represses them” (Juana, 17 years old) and rejects them.

“The man can have sex because he is a man and he can do as he jolly well pleases. The woman has to take care in face of society because if she doesn’t, everybody would want to have sex with her, will be disrespectful to her, and men will no longer have good intentions towards her” (Erica, 18 years old).

“[If she had premarital sex] People would talk bad things about the woman. They would say she is loose and wild” (Marisol, 15 years old).

It is worth highlighting that - one of the only two male adolescents- who believed that sex is more important to women, explained his view by describing those teenage girls as more promiscuous than men; “You can find a woman who wants to have sex, anywhere you go” (Florentino, 20 years old). Likewise, Martha (16 years old) mentioned that “There are women who, because they already have had sex once, they want to have sex with whoever crosses their way, and often the man will reproach her because she is not a virgin anymore”.

The teaching of abstinence until marriage turns marriage into the only condition under which sex is appropriate for many Mexican teenage girls. The Church and the white dress become for many, signs of purity that unmask adolescent girls when they lose their virginity. As Victor (18 years old) explained “the woman has always wished to reach the altar wearing a white dress”. If she is not a virgin, this possibility would be denied to her and will give a clear proof of her being a wild slut. There were nonetheless interviewees who, due to their present situation or, their more liberal view, argued that premarital sex is possible for a woman only if “the man assures her that he is going to marry her” (Angel, 15 years old). Likewise, Martha (17 years old) explained, “Intercourse should happen with just one person. If they are boyfriend and girlfriend and they are thinking about getting married, and they are sure about it, they can have sex before getting married.” It is interesting to notice that marriage -or its possibility- becomes, from the point of view of a few female participants (2%), a situation that awakens young women’s sexual desire. This is so, because they believe that a woman’s motivation for sex arises just after the union.

Virginity is also important (for 10% of young women) because it is considered a proof, given to the partner or husband, that he has been the first and only one with whom the young woman has had sex. Osvaldo (18 years old) clearly expressed his need to have a “proof” that his partner has not been a loose woman and that he will marry a virgin. As he explained: “Sex is important because it is a way of being sure of your partner, sure that she only has had sex with you”. Likewise, Laura (15 years old) mentioned that “men like to be the first in having sex with the woman they will marry”. This is a clear example of how, as mentioned in different studies (Colombo, 2012; Rojas-Solís *et al.* 2013) and stated by Tolman (2002) “The good girl-bad girl dichotomy” has been tried to be “challenged but has not yet been dismantled” (2002:119). These quotes also support findings of other studies (Miller, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Holland *et al.* 1998), which show that for men the importance of intercourse, even in a more serious relationship, is to be the first one to have sex with the woman they love- proving with this their sexual control and dominance. Moreover, for some adolescent girls, marriage also becomes a “safety zone” that will protect them from abortion, abandonment and ridicule. Therefore, sex should wait until this commitment is made.

“If one is married it is fine to have sex because if the woman becomes pregnant she does not have to have an abortion if the boyfriend does not want to marry her” (Rosa, 18 years old).

[If they have sex and] “they are not married he can leave her. Once you are married, he has a responsibility” (Imelda, 17 years old).

Finally, there were participants who were strongly influenced by moral discourses that describe premarital sex for woman as something “bad” (Diana, 14 years old) or “incorrect” (Rosa, 18 years old). Diana did not even have a real knowledge of why premarital sex is wrong for women. She only based her discourse on her mother’s reaction: “Because my mother got very upset with me and it seems that it is something bad” (Diana, 14 years old, living in free union). Other participants (13% of women and 16% of men) limited young women’s sexual activity to procreation, by arguing that they should not have sex if they do not plan to have a baby.

As my evidence shows, the value placed on teenage girls' virginity before marriage poses severe burdens on them, making them fearful of being constructed as immoral. They, as opposed to young men, considered the preservation of premarital virginity as fundamental to their social status, since sexually active teenage girls could face social rejection and be considered promiscuous or loose.

#### **6.4. - Equity discourses in sexuality**

However, it is important to mention that there are adolescents who voice less traditional attitudes towards sex and sexual stereotypes. Equity was expressed by many participants when considering different sexual topics, which show, as other studies have also pointed out (Allen, 2003; Maxwell, 2007; Renold and Ringrose, 2008), variable levels of resistance and accommodation to traditional and dominant gender role interactions, as defined by Holland *et al.* (1998) 'male in the head' model.

Among an important percentage of participants (74% of female and 67% of male), the need for male greater sexual experience when reaching marriage was not relevant. These participants appeared to recognize non-traditional gender traits in the expression of their and their partner's self-understanding and heterosexual expectations and experiences. As a matter of fact, an unexpected percentage of male (19%) and female adolescents (17%), did believe men should not have sex before marriage. Besides the fact that this finding suggests an acknowledgment that men do not have to be the providers of information, one could also infer that, if these young men see sex as an initiation into manhood, the fact of being more experienced than women once they reach marriage seems to be less important for them. The reasons provided by the interviewees (26% of female and 11% of male participants) to support this discourse, referred to the importance of mutual virginity; by both being virgins, they can learn together, discover each other's sexually and make the experience more meaningful.

“Because, if they are both virgin, they will both discover each other little by little. If he has more experience it is not the same excitement” (Erica, 18 years old).

“It is nice when they both surrender to each other before doing it with someone else. It is nicer to have sex with your partner if you love and desire her” (Gonzalo, 20 years old).

When considering teenage girls’ sexual pleasure by asking; “Do you think that intercourse can happen just to derive pleasure?” and “Do you believe that a woman who has sex for pleasure, and not to have children, is a bad woman?” a significant percentage of teenagers showed, again, an apparent resistance to or non-compliance with traditional gender discourses, and stated that young women could have sexual intercourse just to derive pleasure, regardless of what the social norms dictate for them. Likewise, the majority of respondents (87% of adolescent girls and 84% boys) expressed that a young woman who has sex for pleasure and not to have children is not a “slut” or a “loose woman.”

Nonetheless, when the respondents were asked this same question but directed to what men would think; “Do you believe that for most men, a woman who has sex for pleasure and not for childbearing, is a “loose” woman?” the answers changed significantly. Half of both male (51%) and female (50%) adolescents expressed that a man would consider the young woman to be “loose” if she has sex for pleasure and not to have children. This difference in percentages could be explained by the fact that it is easier to collect more genuine answers when the question refers to a third person, making the participants’ vacillations between stereotypical and gender-equal attitudes to young women, more obvious. As Maxwell also found in her study in the UK, the stance taken appears to depend on whether the teenagers discuss young women in general (“associated with normative attitudes”) or their present relationship (“associated with shifting attitudes”) (Maxwell, 2007:551). The contradictory voices could also be attributed to the fact that, while some young women and men are open to “experiencing alternative identities and heterosexual practices” (Maxwell, 2007:551), they do not expect or believe men in general are moving away from the traditional framework. Equally valid would

be Colombo's et al. (2012) findings where adolescents' discourses demonstrated that their mothers and fathers have transmitted to them conceptions concerning the ideals of males and females in which ruptures, as well as continuities, are still relevant to hegemonic models.

When it came to considering young women as sexual beings, it was positive to see that more than a third of teenage boys (39%) believed that to be a man sexually speaking, was to sexually satisfy the woman, to support her, be her complement, give her love and make her feel protected. These male participants seemed to identify themselves more with the positive discourses of *Caballerismo* (Arciniega, 2008), which challenges discourses of traditional *Machismo*. As has been mentioned previously in the literature chapter, *Caballerismo* is a positive image of a man, which focuses on social responsibility and emotional connectedness. Such traits are perceived as positive aspects of manhood. These participants take into consideration the young woman's sexual pleasure and not only their own. As Pedro (19 years old) stated: "[To be a man sexually speaking is] To have a satisfaction knowing that one makes a woman happy". Discourses such as this one, describe teenage boys "as having emotional, not only sexual, needs and projected onto their female partners a significant personalized and active function, not apparent in their objectifying statements made about women more generally" (Maxwell, 2007:545).

Another relevant finding -considering equity in sexuality- was that, when asked; "*To whom having sex is more important?*" most participants, both male (65%) and female (53%), voiced that sex is as important to young women as it is to men. One of the main discourses of teenage girls (38%) and boys (48%) centred on equality in sexuality in terms of desire, pleasure, needs and rights. They viewed young women as beings pursuing a more active role within their emotional relationship and young men, as people welcoming this assertiveness. As Elizabeth (18 years old) explained: "Intercourse takes place between two people. If they both can give each other pleasure, the greater the pleasure. They both have the right and need to have sex". Jesús (18 years old) also

considered shared sexual pleasure when commenting, “If one has sex it is to reach a mutual satisfaction, not only one’s own”.

Two other discourses- that supported the view that sex is important to both- described intercourse as an element of cohesiveness in the couple (mentioned by 10% of teenage girls and 9% of boys) and, as a way to prove love and commitment (3% of female and 4% of male adolescents). As mentioned in the literature review, some teenage girls tend to talk about relationships and not about desire or sexual pleasure, when they refer to their sexual experiences. However, as can be noticed in Lourdes’ response, mutual sexual satisfaction, sexual compatibility, as well as, the need to get to know one’s partner more intimately, are required conditions to make the right choice: “It is after having intercourse that one knows how much communication and satisfaction exist among them and they will know if they will make it together or not” (Lourdes, 19 years old).

My evidence also suggests that- at least when a more formal relationship is considered- teenage boys associate sex with the quality of the relationship and view it as a mean of communication and a way of getting to know each other better. As Marcelino and Abraham (both, 18 years old) mentioned, sex is important to both because: “It is a way to show how much they love each other” and “to demonstrate the devotion that exists between them”.

Finally, few teenage girls (3%) and boys (4%) argued that sex is important to both because of a mutual wish to have a child. It is important to remember that, to have a child becomes an important avenue to achieve adulthood, prove womanhood and manhood and gain respect and status for many teenagers living in a patriarchal society (Geldstein and Pantelides, 1997; Pearce, 1999; Lamas, 2003; Giordano *et al.* 2009; Reyes and Cabello-Garza, 2011; Colombo *et al.* 2012). However, the small percentage of teenagers in this research, who considered this discourse, could be explained by the lack of intention to procreate at this moment in their lives.

Another aspect in which equality seems to be considered was found when asking: “*Who should take the initiative to have intercourse?*” Around a third of teenage boys (36%) and most adolescent girls (90%) believed that they should both take the initiative to have sex. The high percentage of young women could suggest the wish of many, to be active participants in the sexual arena or perhaps, a fear to appear too liberal if they openly express their wish to be the sole initiators, which could expose them to receiving criticism for it. All teenage girls and most boys (32%) who argued that both should have the initiative to have sex, explained their reasons by considering equality in terms of desire and pleasure. These participants believed that intercourse is more satisfactory if both take an active role and, since both have the desire and are in love, there should not be any “protocol”. They also saw the sexual relationship as one, which does not require that someone in particular take the role of the initiator, since they both feel confident and have the same rights. From their perspective, sex is a mutual agreement.

However is it worth highlighting that, discourses that focus on pleasure were again considered in the context of a more formal relationship. It is believed that the strong percentage of teenage girls who stood up for equality in sexuality in this study, could suggest the presence of a greater number of young women who were having more liberal views that forced them to redefine sexual discourses. Both young men and women seem to recognise their sexual needs and desires and, believed that sex is a matter of mutual satisfaction. Likewise, specifically from the male participants’ point of view, these results could suggest a greater wish to free themselves of the “sexual demands” they have been socially subject to and, a wish to see women taking a more active stand towards sex. However, this demonstration of a commitment to a set of expectations that could be considered as more gender equal, usually takes place- once more- within a more romantic or stable relationship, as also found in Maxwell’s (2007) and Rojas-Solís and Flores (2013) studies.

Finally, it was interesting to notice- among the reasons to explain why premarital sex is a natural behaviour for men- that 15% of teenage girls referred

to their own sexual satisfaction and their acceptance as sexual beings. This is to say, the awareness that they, the same as men, need sex and look for sexual pleasure in their relationships.

“There are many women like me who have a lot of desire” (María, 16 years old).

“It is what the body needs” (Jenny, 16 years old).

“Sex is a need for both” (María Victoria, 16 years old).

On this same line it is worth highlighting that a greater percentage of teenage boys (60%) vis-à-vis girls (41%) expressed that it is natural for a woman to have premarital sex. The main discourse used to support this view, showed a change in attitudes towards sexuality, regardless of gender and marital status (19% of female and 25% of male participants):

“Many people say that just the man can have sex before marriage. However, things have changed. I believe that we both have the same rights” (Karla, 14 years old).

“Nowadays nobody gets married being a virgin” (Marino, 17 years old).

“Now one can have sex with anybody anywhere” (Eduardo, 19 years old).

Nonetheless, some of the female (19%) and male (35%) participants who supported equality in premarital sex for women, were aware of the difficulties and the price these teenagers will have to pay- a price which obviously, is always higher than the one paid by men.

“It is ‘natural’ for a woman to have sex before marriage, however she is more criticized. She is badly viewed by society and rejected by men” (Macbeth, 20 years old).

“It is normal because the behaviour abounds, but it is not well viewed” (Elizabeth, 18 years old).

“I do not believe that there is a problem but, socially it is very important for the woman to be a virgin” (Ana, 17 years old).

As Maxwell also found in her study, these teenagers seem to be moving “relatively easily between expressing what other studies would categorize as ‘non-traditional’ attitudes while at the same time, describing and making sense of their experiences using what might be described as the ‘dominant’ heterosexual framework of understanding” (Maxwell, 2007:544). This often results, as found here, in apparently contradictory discourses, “where ultimately any clear shift away from ‘normative’ heterosexual identities and practices seemed tenuous” (Maxwell, 2007:544). As some teenage boys’ answers showed, there is still some reluctance too from them towards the full acceptance of these liberal views:

“It is not very normal but ... there is the idea that the woman has to reach marriage as a virgin but if she doesn’t, well what can you do” (Erik, 19 years old).

“It is natural for a woman to have premarital sex as long as the man assures her that he will marry her” (Angel, 15 years old).

All these discourses suggest that some female interviewees are starting to recognize and welcome a move towards more equality, which would give them more space for expression of their own desires. Likewise teenage boys seem to share these views and do not regard these changes as particularly threatening to them, on the contrary, they seem to be expressing a wish to free themselves from the “sexual demands” they have been socially subject to and, a wish to see women taking a more active stand towards sex.

It is important to remember that, despite this sense of change and the acknowledgement that -young women may have premarital sex, express interest in sexual satisfaction and even have as much sexual experience as men - the prevalence of a double standard is still very much in play and understood by the participants. This finding shows this complexity since, on one hand both teenage boys and girls see sex as a behaviour in which equality

must exist but, on the other hand, it is hard to overlook the minimum percentage of both gender participants (5% of young women and 2% of men), who believe that sex can be more important to a woman than to a man. Likewise, no man considered that the woman should take the initiative to have sex; teenage boys stated that it should be the man (64%) who initiates sex or both together (36%), but never the woman alone. Only very few male teenagers (4%) expressed their wish to have a woman who will be more active in the relationship, since they seem to be tired of having to be in control all the time and wish the woman would take some of the leadership, as Juan Carlos (18 years old) explained: “Because, well one is happy to start but one gets fed up to be the only one harassing the woman. It is better if it comes from her.”

As the answers in this study show, it is important to understand that discourses are not reducible to language; they materialize power relations through the doing and performing of discourses, as articulated by Butler (Ringrose, 2012). These discourses show that, despite other examples mentioned previously of young people’s views and practices that question ‘dominant discourses of heterosexuality’ (Allen, 2003), teenagers’ resistance is vulnerable and fragile. Dominant narratives continue to emerge and exert control over many young adolescents’ sexual lives. As Allen (2003) found in her study, teenagers are at the same time, accommodating and resisting (Aggleton, 1987) or rupturing (Renold and Ringrose, 2008) dominant forms of heterosexuality. These answers show that the construction of gendered sexes falls within what Butler calls, using Foucault’s term, “regulative discourses” or “frameworks of intelligibility”, that specify the gendered sexual behaviours which are socially considered “natural” (Butler, 1990). Therefore, as also found in other studies (Bustos, 2009; García *et al.* 2010; Rojas-Solís and Flores, 2013), beliefs, views and behaviours of young people are still impregnated by gendered roles and expectations, although some attempts to challenge them are emerging.

## 6.5. - Dominant discourses in Contraception

When trying to understand lack of use of contraception and women's lack of assertiveness in sexual encounters, it is essential to comprehend the multiple barriers that interfere with the negotiation and decision-making about contraception. The "*machista*" behaviour described previously is often found in discourses related to contraception. When asked: "*Do you like to use a condom?*" many male participants (20%) argued they do not use the condom because their sexual desire overtakes them and because it takes out the spontaneity of sex (70%). As Rafael and Juan Carlos explained:

"I have never prepared myself for sex. Intercourse has happened in an unplanned and spontaneous way" (Rafael, 20 years old).

"I do not use a condom because it doesn't cross my mind to do it. I would not like to use it" (Juan Carlos, 18 years old).

What is even more alarming is the percentages found when asking; "Do you think that men's sexual desire is affected when women use contraceptives?" 25% of female participants and 17% of male answered this question in an affirmative way. These discourses, as Measor (2006) also found, show how the erotic prevails over any discourse of sexual safety. Pleasure overrides risk. Passion is given the highest importance in a hierarchy of what counts in a sexual culture and therefore, no real importance is given to the taking of contraceptive responsibility in the discourses of many teenagers.

Fear of not being able to sexually perform as expected, was also mentioned by some teenage boys (16%), as a reason for not using a condom. As the following participants explained:

"When I put it on, I cannot have sex. I am not used to it" (Rogelio, 20 years old).

"I do not like the condom because of the idea that it creates in me. It bothers me. I cannot have sex" (José, 20 years old).

Likewise, shame of buying it or not knowing how to use this contraceptive was also mentioned. As Pablo (18 years old) stated: "I have never used one because honestly, one does not know how to go to the drugstore and ask for them". These discourses are similar to those obtained by Chávez (1999) and Stenberg's (2000) and suggest that, for many teenagers, the deeply rooted expectations on them to take risks and have frequent sex, move them to consider condoms as unmanly and as a barrier to affirming their virility.

Another important point to consider in relation to contraception is that it is related to the burdens imposed by masculinity on many men; (Sbarbi Osuna, 2012; Larrañaga *et al.* 2012) having sex and refusing condoms because they are conditioned to doing so, rather than because they want to (Foreman, 1999). This was found among a fourth of male participants of this study, who were against family planning methods and expressed a dislike for them, but admitted they have never used them. In longer-term relationships- as other studies have also found- the implication of lack of trust and lack of respect for the female partner can make condoms unacceptable (Medrano, 1994; Holland *et al.* 1998; Feldman *et al.* 1997; Gage, 1998; Szasz, 2006). This contraceptive is intended for use only in relationships with women who cannot be trusted, and is associated with extramarital affairs, lack of cleanliness and sexually transmitted infections (Szasz, 1998b; 2006). In this study, although few, there were teenage boys (4%) who use this same discourse, as Macbeth's answer shows, when being asked what he thought about birth control methods:

"They [contraceptives] are a way of having sexual intercourse but without the responsibility and you can hurt your partner's feelings. I don't like that. It becomes more physical and you forget about the feelings. Without the condom I feel that I am devoting myself completely and if my partner decides not to use contraception, she will also be devoting herself completely to me" (Macbeth, 20 years old).

When participants were asked why a woman does not use contraception, almost a third of young men (27%) referred to their own beliefs and wishes: "She might wish to have sex in a freer and cleaner way" (Edgar, 17 years old); "Because she wishes to feel something clean. To feel the man she loves"

(Pedro, 17 years old) or, because with a contraceptive, “a woman does not enjoy sex as much as without it” (Alberto, 18 years old). All these answers clearly show how the condom shapes ideas about intimacy, connectedness and mutual commitment, thus making it inappropriate in a more serious relationship (Amuchástegui, 1999; Szasz, 2006; Calafat et al. 2009 and Teva et al. 2009). As a few teenage girls’ (5%) argued; “If there is not a condom, nothing intervenes between him and me” (María, 18 years old); “You feel your partner more. One feels more the affection that one has for the partner” (Sandra, 16 years old). As Larrañaga et al. (2012) found -even in 2012- the more “machismo” and romanticism there is, the greater the tendency to reject preventive measures within sexual relationships.

When considering young women, different fears were expressed in this study, fears which show, as diverse researches have also done, that the negotiation of safe sex is not just a matter of individuals making rational choices but the outcome of a confrontation -sometimes even violent- between potentially unequal partners (Aggleton, 1996; Paiva, 1996; Ortiz and Ortega, 1998; Weiss and Rao Gupta, 1998; Limasca Gutiérrez and Arango Ochante, 2012; Rivas Bocanegra *et al.* 2014). Taking into consideration that almost a third of teenage girls (28%) and a fifth of boys (19%) argued that men do not like their partners to use contraception, it was not surprising to find that some young women (10%) and men (5%) considered man’s opposition and the fear of making him angry (17% of teenage girls and 10% of boys) as reasons why teenage girls may be reluctant to introduce birth control methods in their relationship. As Raúl (19 years old) voiced, “the man forbids women to use a contraceptive” while Bianca (15 years old) mentioned that young women “fear that their husbands may create a big scandal. They fear he can hit them or something like that”. Likewise, although most participants included positive responses when asked about man’s reaction when the woman wants to use a contraceptive, there were others who identified negative reactions, such as anger (17% men vs. 13% women), disappointment (5% men vs. 2% women) and even threat of abandonment (4% men vs. 5% women).

Some teenagers also referred to the fear of a sullied reputation. They believed, as others studies have also demonstrated (Holland *et al.* 1996; Amuchástegui, 1998b) that teenagers who used contraception or ask young men to use a condom, are “fair game for the label” (Tolman, 2002:12). Erika (16 years old) for example, argued that young women “fear what their partner can think of them”, while Lourdes (19 years old) said that “women fear being caught with a contraceptive if they are not married”. These fears do not seem to be unfounded since, when asked; “*Do you believe that for most men, a woman who has sex for pleasure and not for childbearing, is a loose woman?*” there were teenage boys (21%) and girls (14%) in this research who answered that, men in general, consider the use of contraception by women as something that can be judged negatively; the young woman can be considered as someone who has already had sexual experience with other men (16% vs. 11%) or as a “loose” or easy woman (5% vs. 3%) who could be looked down upon and gossiped about.

Moreover, the fear of losing their man if they use birth control methods is also present among young women from this study. As Karina (15 years old) expressed: “Men feel less sexual desire towards the woman who is using contraception”. Virginia (13 years old) also voiced this concern by mentioning that: “The man does not keep on loving her the same because if she takes care of herself [using contraception] it is because she does not want to have children with him”. These fears- often unfounded- are related to a concern about not being able to live up to the man’s expectations, and therefore being abandoned. Following the same line, there were more than a third of adolescent girls (35%) and almost a fifth of boys (18%) who explained that there are young women who do not use family planning methods because they wish to become pregnant or they desire to have a child to make their partners feel good. Considering this information, it was not surprising to find that the fear of becoming sterile (6% of teenage girls and 3% of boys) and the risks of side effects (7% of young women) that could have an impact on their ability to procreate- again based mainly on misconceptions- were also considered among the reasons why a woman does not use birth control methods.

It is worth mentioning that, as Amuchástegui (1998b) also found in her study, although Mexico is a country where the majority of its population is catholic, female participants' accounts were not influenced as much as expected by religious beliefs. The fear to sin was found among very few (2%) teenage girls, which suggests that the Catholic Church- as opposed to dominant discourses- does not seem to play such an important role as a regulator of sexual behaviour. In addition to this, although many young women are still subject to men's will - as the information presented shows- there are others who are able to influence the course of a sexual encounter and to exercise more assertiveness with regard to the use of contraception. As previously mentioned, 69% of teenage boys from this study have used the condom. When they were asked to rank different possible explanations, why they have used this contraceptive, their partners' pressure was mentioned as the third most frequent reason. Likewise, as was commented above, a greater percentage of both young men (78%) and women (85%) believed it is a positive thing for a teenage girl to want contraception. They describe her as intelligent (44% vs. 0%), responsible (29% vs. 42%) and as someone who takes care of her health (5% vs. 43%).

Finally, when the male participants were asked, in case someone had to use birth control methods who they preferred to use them, a fifth (21%) answered that it was best if they both used a contraceptive at the same time, to obtain greater safety. These answers show the openness of many adolescents who view young women as active members in the sexual act and not as a passive one who should only rely on men's decisions.

## **6.6. - Conclusion**

As this chapter shows, both gender participants, but mainly teenage girls, still considered the preservation of virginity as fundamental to women's social status, whether or not they actually respected it. Many regard sexual activity as a prerogative of masculinity and, female sexuality as strongly subject to moral

judgement. The socio-sexual expectations surrounding virginity, which are placed on adolescent girls, contribute to their vulnerability. Young women have less control than men over the initiation of sex and the nature and conditions of each sexual encounter, particularly when they are not engaged in a serious or committed relationship (Tolman, 2002; Rivas Bocanegra *et al.* 2014).

My evidence suggests that masculinity, femininity and constructions of appropriate sexuality, are “defined by, and against, one another in a way that promotes inequity among women and men” (Davison and Frank, 2006:154). As Chilisa states, teenage boys take advantage of the gendered and cultural texts and practices, to “valorize their masculinities and to create controlled femininities for girls that are relational and inferior to boys’ masculinities” (Chilisa, 2006:260). Nonetheless both gender participants seem to be losing in the sexual terrain. The strong and persistent tension exerted on teenage girls between sexual dangers such as - being considered a slut, losing respect, fearing abandonment and risking a pregnancy or a venereal disease- and sexual pleasure, is “an involuntary aspect of being a woman in a patriarchal society” (Tolman, 2002:48). Likewise, as Holland *et al.* (1998) also found in their work, although masculinity brings with it privileges and freedoms denied to most women, it also imposes burdens. For adolescent boys, achieving a masculine reputation provides a sexual freedom denied to young women, but sometimes at the expense of gentleness and intimacy. In addition to this it is important, as Alldred and David (2007) mention “to recognize the difficulties young men face in struggling to perform a credible masculinity in the eyes of their peers, and the cost of succeeding or penalties of being lacking” (2007:6).

What is important to highlight is that a significant percentage of teenagers from this study, are not uncritically engaging in dominant discourses and are negotiating discourses in complex ways, defining some of their ideas about their own sexual behaviours to achieve a sense of identity, which is not always in agreement with other social and gendered expectations. Thus there are Mexican teenagers within this cultural context in particular, who voice less traditional attitudes towards sexual practices and enjoyment and, would like to

consider sex in a more egalitarian way -by respecting women, considering them as sexual beings with desires and rights and acknowledge that they can express interest in sex and even make the first move within limits (Holland *et al.* 1998). Despite this, there is still a great majority of adolescents who are invested in discourses that privilege male sexual power and desires, illustrating that the prevalence of a double standard is still assumed. These adolescents appear invested in dominant discourses. As a result of this conflict -between what is expected and what participants feel should change- adolescents tend to end up supporting and reproducing, to a greater degree, the gender discourses imposed and transmitted by society and its institutions. In my conclusion and discussion (Chapter VI) I will come back to this question to offer suggestions concerning what should be done to address this issue.

## CHAPTER VII. - UNDERSTANDINGS OF GENDER AND PARENTING

### 7.1. - Introduction

Motherhood has been studied from different angles. Chodorow (1978) talks about deeply embedded abilities and needs of women for and intense relationship with a child. She explains, using a psychoanalytic perspective, that “as long as women mother, we can expect that a girl’s preoedipal period will be longer than that of a boy and that women, more than men, will be more open to and preoccupied with those very relational issues that go into mothering—feelings of primary identification, lack of separateness or differentiation, ego and body-ego boundary issues and primary love under the sway of the reality principal” (Chodorow, 1978:110). Other studies have found reasons more related to social and historical factors such as low social and economic status and political context (UNICEF, 1994; INSTRAW, 1995), the effect of a dichotomous social patriarchal arrangement (Goldner, 1985) and women’s oppression (Pyne, 1994; Foreman, 1999). Different authors have found that motherhood is perceived as an element that empowers poor women, which opens to them a wider range of possibilities of liberation (Phoenix, 1992).

Motherhood, together with marriage, allows young women to acquire a sense of self-worth and accomplishment (García and De Oliveira, 1994; Marqués, 1997) and, are important avenues or pre-requisites to increase young women’s social position and gain respect and status within their community (Furstenberg Jr., 1998; Alatorre and Atkin in Schmukler, 1998; Deirdre, 2000). Motherhood has been socially defined as the fullness or completeness of the feminine (Juliano, 2004). As Lamas (2003) states, motherhood and maternal love show the social hierarchized order of gender. Motherhood -even now a day appears more as a destiny than a possible choice for many women (UNFPA, 2013) in which “the mystification of the fulfilment and happiness of women is reproduced as a process associated with motherhood” (Colombo *et al.* 2012:166).

The aim of this chapter is to investigate how gender discourses influence the views of parenthood among Mexican adolescents. The premise of this study is the belief that the value of a pregnancy is “enhanced” by different views, related to the status and power thought to be gained by the future parents (mainly mothers) within their relationship and in society. It is important to highlight that although the information provided in my study refers mainly to the years 1994-1997- Coria (2014) found that the situation has not changed much for many Mexican women over the last 25 years. She believes both men and women still run into difficulties to generate significant change. This author believes that the greater obstacle for women lies in their difficulty to give up the maternal model that is the base of the ideal femininity. On the other hand, she argues that the obstacle for many men resides in their inability to give up the patriarchal hierarchy model that puts them in a position of always having to have more; more erections, more money, greater knowledge, more authority etc., in order not to risk being considered less of a man.

This chapter therefore intends to show, from the teenagers’ point of view, to what extent parenthood makes a teenager turn into a woman or a man and gain greater value, status and respect in society. In addition to this, there is an interest in understanding how these discourses influence unplanned pregnancies.

## **7.2. - Womanhood through motherhood**

As mentioned previously, an important part of adolescent girls’ conception of being a woman, is related to childbearing (Pitanguy and De Mello E. Souza 1997; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Victoria and Knauth, 2001; López, 2014). By having a baby, adolescent girls may believe that they are acquiring an important responsibility and consequent womanhood, which they could not otherwise enjoy. When teenage girls were asked: “*What it means to you to be a woman*”, a third of them (32%) referred to their gender roles as mothers:

“Give love to my partner, give him children” (Patricia, 20 years old).

“ [I am a woman because] I can have children” (Olga, 19 years old).

When they were questioned: “A *teenager girl turns into a woman when she has a baby?*” more than half the adolescent girls (64%) and half the boys (54%) believed this statement to be true. However it is important to highlight that most young women (51%) and men (47%) view a pregnancy, as a stressful event that makes them face a more limiting lifestyle where the main focus relies on moving away from their parents; “She does not live at home [with her parents] anymore and she has to do everything that a ‘señora’ (married woman) does” (Perla, 17 years old); changing their social status; “She mixes up together with the adults and she becomes more of a woman” (Rogelio, 20 years old) and taking care of her children and husband, losing her freedom and even the fun of life.

“One changes with the responsibility of having a baby. I won’t have as much fun as I used to. Now I have to dedicate my time to my child and my husband” (María Victoria, 16 years old).

“She has to become a responsible woman, she is no longer a young girl who can do as she pleases” (Marino, 17 years old).

“Because it is no longer the same. Our parents no longer let us go out of our houses. They don’t let us go out as before when we were young” (Martha, 16 years old).

As these discourses show, and as other studies (Pitanguy and De Mello E Souza, 1997; Stern, 2002; Yardley; 2008) have found, for many of these teenage girls, to have a child is often considered an opportunity to achieve womanhood, improve their status and define who they are- whether they like the process of this transformation or not. As Thomson *et al.* also found in their study “One of the attractions of motherhood was the potential to abandon an individual project of self, putting others first and entering into a collective endeavour” (Thomson *et al.* 2008:9).

Another discourse found when asking this same question was based in a physiological/sexual criteria. Almost twice as many young women (13%) than

men (8%) referred to physical changes and the loss of virginity, as passages into womanhood that automatically place them in a different status, as Rosa (18 years old) explained; “A teenager becomes a woman when she has a child because she is not a virgin anymore. Her body is no longer the same” or as Alma (17 years old) stated; “Because she is a ‘señora’ (married woman). She already lost her virginity”. Young men, on the other hand focus on the fact that a young woman, by entering into a fertile phase and giving birth to a baby, becomes a woman.

“I believe a girl is a woman when she enters to the fertile stage even though she has not a baby” (David, 19 years old).

“Her organs already went through a change and she too” (Ernesto, 19 years old).

Few teenage girls (5%) and boys (4%) believed that a girl becomes a woman not by having a baby but by menstruating or after losing their virginity.

“She starts to be a woman when she has her period” (María, 15 years old).

“She becomes a woman after she has intercourse for the first time” (Soraida, 19 years old).

“Sexual intercourse and physiological changes are the ones that make a girl become a woman and not the baby” (Eloy, 20 years old).

As the information presented shows –gender, as Butler maintains- is “a modality of taking on or realizing possibilities, a process of interpreting the body, giving it cultural form” (Butler, 1986:36). However, around a third of teenage girls (36%) and 46% of young men, disagreed with the view that motherhood is a passage to womanhood. Twice as many young men (38%) than young women (18%) supported their answers by arguing that, regardless of giving birth or not, an adolescent still lacks psychological maturity as well as social development, which makes them think and act as girls. It is interesting to notice that none of the participants referred to schooling as an avenue to gain maturity.

“A woman should know how to be one. She can have a baby and have a very childish mentality” (Martha, 17 years old).

“To be a woman means to be a woman physical and mentally wise and not only because she menstruates or has a child” (Rafael, 20 years old).

“To be a woman is something different from having a baby. The fact of having a child does not mean that you are already a responsible person” (Carlos, 17 years old).

Similar to these views were those referred to by both gender participants as age as an indicator of womanhood. Few teenage girls (4%) and boys (4%) argued that womanhood is a matter of growing up and not a matter of having a baby.

“Because an adolescent is an adolescent until a certain age” (Argentina, 17 years old).

“Because from age 18 you stop being a girl and you become a woman” (Rafael, 19 years old).

“To be a woman has to do with age and the responsibilities and not because you have a baby” (Marcos, 20 years old).

Finally, there were few teenage girls (9%) who voiced less dominant discourses, which defined a woman, not based on her reproductive capacity but on her intelligence and autonomy as a human being (9%). The following participants seem to be in the process of discursive re-signification (Butler, 1993), this is to say, the process of transforming social norms. Victoria (15 years old) for example stated that “an adolescent turns into a woman when she is independent and when she does not need anybody to do well in life”. Likewise Elizabeth (18 years old) expressed that “a woman has to be intelligent, stand on her own two feet and feminine. You can be that way without having a baby”. It is interesting however to see that Elizabeth seems to fear that the first two qualities she mentioned -intelligent and independent- could affect a woman’s femininity, and therefore, felt the need to include “feminine” in her discourse. This could reflect as Allen (2003) also found, that there are young women who are, both accommodating and resisting the dominant discourses that have defined them for years.

### **7.3. - Views concerning the importance for a woman to have children**

In order to gather more information about the importance of motherhood in a woman's life, the interviewees were asked "Why is it important that a woman has children"? They were provided with the following options of response to choose from and asked to rank them in order of importance; "It is the way to fulfil herself in life", "To be socially accepted", "To satisfy her maternal instinct", "To have someone to live for", "To have someone who will always love her" and "It is not important". Most teenage girls believed that it is important to be a mother because that way, the woman will have someone to live for (31%), while most adolescent boys (28%) referred to the view that, by having a baby, a woman gains social status. It is interesting to notice that while young men gave little weight to the view that women will have someone to live for (6%), not many young women (3%) seem to consider the fact of gaining a greater social status, as an important reason to have a child. Moreover, while a fifth of adolescent girls (20%) considered motherhood as a way to satisfy their maternal instinct only 8% teenage boys did. Both, female and male adolescents, however, did argue that motherhood is important because, by having a child, a young woman will have someone who will always love her (26% and 14% respectively) and she will find fulfilment in her life (considered by 15% of teenage girls and 20% of boys).

As the results show, female participants seem to be more centred on the belief that their children will become their companions and will always love them, while male participants see motherhood more as an avenue for women to gain social acceptance and find self-fulfilment. In addition to this, it is important to highlight that almost a fourth of young boys (24%) were far less concerned with motherhood than young girls (5%).

### **7.4. - Motherhood as an avenue to gain respect**

Another discourse about motherhood found in different studies, is that women who bear children are more respected than women without children. They are

treated differently not only by their partners and their family but by society in general (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Ortiz Ortega *et al.* 1998; Seif El Dawla *et al.* 1998; Petchesky, 1998). The results obtained in this research also validate the idea of motherhood as an avenue to increase woman's respect.

When participants were asked if *a woman is treated differently when she is a mother*, two groups emerged; the participants who believe that a woman is treated better when she becomes a mother (79% women, 96% men) and, those who believe that she is treated worse (21% women, 4% men). It is important to mention that among the 21% of female teenagers who believed that a woman is mistreated, 70% were single mothers.

Half of those adolescent girls (51%) and 44% of young men, who believed a woman is treated better when she has a baby, used dominant discourses that refer to the acquisition through motherhood, of more respect, prestige and social recognition. As Irma (17 years old) explained: "People do not call you Miss, they call you Mrs They talk to you with more respect". Gerardo (19 years old) also stated; "By being a woman with a child, she deserves more respect". Other discourses also used to explain the better treatment that mothers receive, referred to the way men are "more gentlemanly and considerate" towards them (Mariela, 18 years old) and to how "they are better treated, not only by their partners but also by their partners' friends" (María, 16 years old). As Gonzalo (20 years old) mentioned:

"Yes, she is treated differently. She already has a baby and one should treat her better" (Gonzalo, 20 years old).

In addition to this, Bianca and Edgar even stated, that motherhood could rescue women from abuse. They refer to the way children "protect" the mother from her partner's mistreatment because violence will not be a good example for them.

"Because if he usually hits her or shouts at her, he won't do it as much anymore, because of what the children might think" (Bianca, 15 years old).

“Yes, because if one “maltrata” (abuses) the woman, the child will notice, therefore when she is a mother, one does not abuse her anymore” (Edgar, 17 years old).

A third of both gender participants (35% girls and 36% of boys) included the view that the woman is treated better when she has a child because mothers are worshipped. In Mexico, as Stobbs (2010) explains, “mothers are referred to as a cross between angels and Saints, who are still virginal, and always self-sacrificing. Mothers are pure and perfect like the Virgin of Guadalupe, worshipped and untouchable” (2010:1). In this country, it is believed that just for the fact of being a mother, a woman is honoured; she acquires a special status and therefore as various participants explained; “People pay more attention towards her and more consideration” (Clara, 18 years old), “They support her more, they take better care of her” (Miriam, 17 years old), “They value her more” (Juana, 19 years old) and, people even “include you more in their conversations” (Carmen, 20 years old).

Teenage boys on the other hand, agreed with these discourses and mentioned that “they [the woman’s partner] love her more” (Pablo, 18 years old), “Most people help her more” (José, 17 years old) and basically, as Samuel (17 years old) stated: “The woman has more privileges, socially speaking, and gets more attention”.

Finally the answers obtained show that almost a fifth of teenage boys (18%) also referred to the acquisition of an adult status, this is to say, that by becoming a mother, the teenage girl matures and becomes a grown-up and therefore needs to be treated differently.

“One does not please her anymore with a “dulcesito” (little candy). They advise her about life” (Jorge, 19 years old).

“One treats her better in all respects. She is no longer treated as a child” (Erik, 19 years old).

Nonetheless, a fifth of teenage girls (21%) and a few young men (4%) argued that a woman is treated worse when she becomes a mother. As mentioned

above, it is important to highlight that 70% of these adolescent girls will be single mothers. Likewise, all the adolescent boys (4%) who believe a woman will be treated worse when she becomes a mother, considered only the circumstances of single mothers. They argued that these young women tend to face prejudice, since “there is discrimination when you get pregnant young and people consider her a loose woman” (Carlos, 17 years old). Young single mothers also receive less support from their nuclear family, as Fausto (17 years old) stated; “Her family will not support her as it used to because they will tell her; ‘let your partner support you’”.

Young women referred to two main discourses when explaining why a woman is mistreated when she becomes a mother. On one hand, the loss of their adolescent status and even their parents’ love (13%) as Alma (18 years old) expressed; “By having a baby we lose our parent’s love and now we have to give love to our children”. On the other hand, there is fear of losing their freedom because they are no longer allowed or can’t go out due to their new responsibilities.

“Between friends one loses the relationship a little. People see you in a different way, as a person who no longer has some free time to talk to them” (Martha, 17 years old).

“They do not have the same freedom and they can no longer do as they please” (Karla, 14 years old).

The remaining 8% of teenage girls believed that young women would be treated worse if they are single mothers, they will be rejected and excluded since to be a single mother is not socially acceptable. They also argued that people in general, give more attention to the child as opposed to the mother and, when considering the workplace, they believe that a mother will not be easily accepted and she could even lose privileges in her workplace if she has a baby.

Those adolescent girls who were facing their pregnancy alone, specifically believed that a single mother would be less loved and respected by people (including their nuclear family), would be perceived as a loose woman and people would take advantage of her and gossip more about her. As Butler (1993) explains: “Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regulated and constrained repetition of norms. And a subject does not perform this repetition; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that ‘performance’ is not a singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance” (Butler, 1993:95).

#### **7.5. - Motherhood as an avenue to gain worth and self-fulfilment**

Many young women in Latin-American countries have found that in order to establish themselves as individuals with rights, there is a need to have children, and often, not just one. It is common to find in patriarchal societies that young adolescent girls, both from upper-middle and lower classes, subscribed to the idea that ‘a woman without children is not a complete woman’ (García and De Oliveira, 1994; Geldstein and Pantelides, 1997; Winocur, 2012; Mishra and Dubey, 2014). Although sterile individuals, both male and female, are not always respected or do not receive a sympathetic reaction from their society, women always seem to carry the greater burden (Lactuo Fabros *et al.* 1998; Wiredu, 1992; Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Molina Torterolo, 2014).

In this study, when considering young sterile women’s social value, it was very interesting to see how, once more, the participants’ opinions changed when the question was not directed to them or their partners, but to men in general. As Maxwell also found, the stance taken appears to depend on whether the teenagers discuss young men in general (“associated with normative attitudes”), or their present relationship (“associated with shifting attitudes”)

(Maxwell, 2007:551). When the teenagers were asked if they believed that a sterile woman is less of a woman, an overwhelming majority of both male (92%) and female (91%) respondents rejected this statement. However, when they were asked if they thought that men in general, believe that a sterile woman is less of a woman, just 71% of teenage boys and 40% of girls, rejected this view. As the results show, more than half of female and almost a third of male respondents, did believe that men in general, consider a childless woman as less of a woman. Once again the contradictory voices found in this research, could be attributed to the fact that, while some teenagers are open to consider and value alternative discourses, they are aware that Mexican men in general are not yet moving away from the traditional framework.

Following the same line, when asked; *“A woman who does not want any children is worth: more, less or the same?”* the evidence from my study shows that although the majority of young women (90%) and men (83%) believed that she is worth the same as one who does want children, almost twice as many teenage boys (17%) than girls (10%) argued that a woman is worth less if she does not want to have children. As Lizbeth (18 years old) clearly stated: *“To be a woman means that I am worth more after having a baby. After becoming a mother, I am worth more”* (Lizbeth, 18 years old). Contradictory arguments were also found when, although a great majority of both female and male adolescents believed that a woman is worth the same, more than half the adolescents (54% of girls and 69% of boys) -more teenage boys than girls- argued that a woman’s worth increases with motherhood. When inquiring from which point of view does a woman's importance increase by becoming a mother, the participants were given the following options to explain their answer; *“Legally”*, *“Socially”*, *“Family wise”* and *lor “Because she has more rights”*. The information gathered showed that twice as many teenage girls (67%) than boys (34%) believed that women’s value increases from a family’s point of view. However, a greater percentage of young men (42%) compared to women (32%) considered it to be more from a social point of view. In addition to this, 12% of the teenage girls and 19% of the boys believed that a woman’s worth increases because, as a mother, she has more rights. Finally, a few

interviewees (7% of female and 6% of male) argued that teenage girls' value increases legally speaking. This information suggests that women are more worried about their role within the family while, men seem to believe that, by having a child, a woman acquires greater social status.

In order to gather more information, both female and male adolescents were asked if men give women more importance when they are pregnant. The majority of teenage girls (89%) and all the boys (100%) answered in the affirmative. Half of the female participants (52%) and more than half of those teenage boys (83%) argued that by being pregnant, a young woman gains more recognition and social prestige since men pay more attention and care more about her. They added that men are more patient and more interested in the woman's well being and that she is taken more into consideration because she is going to have a baby.

“The man pays more attention to you” (Jenny, 18 years old).

“They [men] do not argue so much with her” (Juana, 19 years old).

“She becomes a ‘muñequita de porcelana’ (chinaware doll)” (Marco Antonio, 18 years old).

“One tries to give them more. They [men] do not consider them much ‘*para lligues*’ (to get off with)” (César, 17 years old).

“They do not call her ‘muchacha’ (young girl) but ‘señora’ (married woman). They do not talk to her anymore because she is married” (Freddy, 17 years old).

The rest of the participants (37% of the girls and 17% of the boys) referred to the way motherhood is worshipped (“*culto a la madre*”) because, as Bianca (15 years old) voiced; “The mother is carrying another life inside her, another human being”. Irma (17 years old) also explained that; “The man gives her [pregnant woman] more importance because she carries a person ‘*de su sangre*’ (of his same blood). They treat them very well”.

Probing more deeply into the importance of motherhood, marital status was also considered. When asked, *Is an unmarried woman with children better*

*regarded than a married one who does not want children?"* most adolescent girls (66%) and boys (76%) believed this statement to be false. However, significant percentages of both female (34%) and male (44%) respondents argued that, regardless of her marital status, a woman with children is considered more worthy than one without. Following the same line, there was an interest to know if, from the participants' point of view, "*a woman becomes more important to a man, when she is pregnant*". While no single adolescent boy believed that men are indifferent to a woman's pregnancy, there were few teenage girls (11%) in this study who argued that men do not care if a woman is or not pregnant. However, it is worth highlighting that 87% of these adolescent girls, were not living with their partner at the time of the interview either because they were abandoned or because they were separated.

"I thought I would be more important to him and now I realized I was wrong" (Liliana, 16 years old).

"They [men] do not care. They [men] do not pay any attention to you in the '*micros*' (minibus) for example" (Wendy, 18 years old).

These quotes sadly reflect the great disappointment that many teenage girls suffer when they become pregnant and their partners do not want the responsibility of fatherhood.

Finally, when considering if motherhood is a woman's greater fulfilment as different studies have found (Marqués, 1997; García and De Oliveira, 1994; Mumtaz and Rauf, 1997; Nakano Glen, 1994; Petchesky, 1998; Winocur, 2012; Molina Torterolo 2014), the results of this study seem to prove the opposite, when the adolescents were asked the question directly. Most of them (87% of young women and 93% of men) expressed the view that a woman is capable of finding fulfilment in life outside motherhood. Nevertheless, there were teenage girls (13%) and boys (7%) who followed more dominant discourses and expressed a belief that a childless woman is not able to find fulfilment in her life. All this information helps us understand how it is possible for these teenage girls and boys to understand themselves in relation to others, and how they use

knowledge constructed within practices and relations, to live their identity (Foucault, 1978).

## **7.6. - Fatherhood**

Research with men has centred mainly on the conception that they have about manhood and not much about the views they have about fatherhood. This study gathered information about both aspects. It explored what a pregnancy brings to teenagers' lives, the meaning they give to fatherhood, their wish to father a child during their teen-age years and their wish to be the sole providers during the baby's first year of life.

### **7.6.1. - Meaning of Fatherhood**

As other studies have also found (Alatorre and Atkin, 1998; De la Vega, 1990; Sternberg, 2000; Szasz, 2006), making a woman pregnant gives young men a stronger feeling of manhood since it is a proof of their virility.

In addition, in this study, a strong percentage of adolescent boys (40%) not only expressed feeling "more of a man" now that they have made their partner pregnant, but the feeling of gaining greater social status by having a baby. When talking to Victor (20 years old) he mentioned that his partner's pregnancy was important to him because: "It is my first child. Because this way I prove that I am a man. I feel better socially speaking". Likewise, Marcelín (18 years old) expressed that it was important to him to have children, "to demonstrate that I am a man. To gain respect in society". Considering this information, it was not surprising to find that a man who is not able to have children, could be considered less of a man by society as the following participants explained:

"The people will say: 'No, he cannot have children... he is *'poco hombre'* (not much of a man)" (Erik, 19 years old).

"Because people think that he can't have a family and he doesn't function as a man" (Victor, 18 years old).

“Because he cannot give life. Even I would criticize him calling him things, like he is a ‘*maricón*’ (sissy)” (Gonzalo, 18 years old).

Another dominant discourse was related to the gendered division of labour. As many studies have shown, men tend to believe that their role is to provide for their family while the responsibility of the women is to take care of their husband and children (Colombo *et al.* 2012; Szasz, 2006; Sternberg, 2000; Foreman, 1999; Chávez, 1999; Dube, 1997). The findings from this research agree with these studies since when asking the adolescent boys what it means to them to be a father, half of the answers (52%) considered a man’s role as an economic and emotional provider. These young men saw fatherhood as a responsibility to take care of both their partner and their child, to make sure they will have what they need to grow up in a healthy environment and have the opportunities they deserve.

“To be a father is to take care of the baby. Support them both economically, the baby and my partner. Give them love and emotional support” (Rafael, 19 years old).

“It is the beginning of a new life in which many responsibilities start. One has to support the family. It is a new life and one needs to think about the child and not anymore about oneself” (Francisco, 19 years old).

There was also an interest in finding out until when would the future father want to support his partner economically, by asking the participants the following question; “Would you rather support your partner economically until the baby is older?” Faced with this question, an overwhelming majority (96%) responded affirmatively. Practically all of them (94%) referred to discourses related to the gendered division of labour. More than half of them (65%) gave reasons, which included the belief that the woman should take care of the child because the baby has to be with his/her mother and needs her care and warmth, while the man works.

“Because I am the man of the house and the wife has to care for the baby and the house while I provide for them” (Luis, 19 years old).

“That way, while I work, there is someone at home who is taking care of my child” (Gerardo, 19 years old).

Almost a third of the young men (29%) argued that a man should provide to show his family and society that he is “a responsible person” (Freddy, 17 years old) and, because “that is what is expected” of him; “Yes, I would like to work because I would feel satisfied, *‘un buen hombre’* (a good man). Maybe because of my pride” (David, 19 years old).

Although with some reluctance, a small percentage of teenage boys (4%) questioned the prevailing dominant discourses and considered the economic need of the family. They argued that the wellbeing of the new family is more important than the socially established division of labour by gender. Ernesto (20 years old) explained; “If she wants to work, let her work. If there is a need for her to help me, let her work. If there is enough money, she shouldn’t work”. However, only two adolescents considered the wellbeing of the woman by saying that they would rather support their partners economically until the baby is older, so she can fully recover from the pregnancy or so she can study.

For another fifth of male participants (23%), fatherhood is a satisfaction and could bring happiness to their lives. For them, it is a reason to be proud of and they added that it is something that men wish for, since it reinforces his manhood. Bishar (19 years old) explained that: “[To be a father] is a very beautiful responsibility. It is something for a man to feel pride in. The fact that a man can have children, it is the macho way of thinking. I would not like to be one of those who cannot have children”.

Few teenagers (7%) referred to the view that fatherhood forced the adolescent to acquire an adult status by becoming more responsible and conscious of their acts. For these teenagers, to have a child is to have a reason to mature.

“[To be a father] is the most beautiful thing that exists. It is the best that can happen to oneself as a man. It helps us to change, *‘sentar cabeza’* (to settle down) and to calm down. To mature. It changes our temperament” (Carlos, 19 years old).

“To be careful with your children and teach them. [Fatherhood means] mainly, maturity and more commitment to bring them up successfully” (Tlahuicole, 19 years old).

A few others (6%) argued that to be a father is to teach one’s children, to advise them and be their guide and their example, as Juan (17 years old) explained; “[to be a father gives you] the chance of being able to teach another human being, who belongs to you, what you know”. Likewise, there were others (5%) who referred to fatherhood as an event, which opens the opportunity to have a home and family of their own; as Gabriel (18 years old) expressed; “To have a child is to form your own family. To have a certain responsibility towards them, towards your new family. A man’s vital reason to fight for a calm and happy life (as far as possible)”.

Other answers mentioned less frequently referred to the problems and restrictions that were expected to come with fatherhood (2%) and the view of fatherhood as a way of being “born again” through one’s child (2%). Finally, Pedro (17-year-old) expressed that fatherhood “is my reason to be loyal and faithful to my partner”.

### **7.6.2. - Teenage Fatherhood**

Although many participants seem to value fatherhood as an important aspect of their lives, there was an interest in finding out if these participants wished to enter fatherhood during their teenage years. When adolescents were questioned “*Did you want a pregnancy at this moment of your life?*” the answers were very even; 49% of them answered affirmatively while 51% mentioned that they did not want to have a child at this moment in their lives. From those who did want a pregnancy, almost a fifth (18%) expressed a wish to have a child as a couple and for the sake of their relationship. Those adolescents considered the newborn baby as someone who would complete, “reaffirm” and seal the union- as Jorge (18 years old) explained- “I wanted to be with my partner. A baby will tie us more together”. Likewise many young men wanted to have a child because they “love” their partner or, because it was their partner’s dream

to have a baby. It is worth mentioning that more than half of the male participants (63%) argued that their partner loves them more now that she is pregnant (61%) and believed a child makes them have a stronger commitment with their partners.

More than a third of adolescent boys (36%) referred to their personal gratification. As Marcelino (18 years old) mentioned, "I wanted to feel the warmth of a child" or as Serafin explained; "I like children". Likewise, some were curious about what it felt to have a child and expressed being prepared to father one since they were ready to settle down. Other answers included a view of a child as someone who will keep them company, as a source of joy and happiness in their lives and someone to live for, as Gerardo voiced:

"I needed a child. I wanted to have someone who gave me a reason to work and to have 'something' that will help me emotionally. To have a reason to work and live for" (Gerardo, 19 years old).

Finally, 24% of these adolescents expressed a wish to become fathers but without any additional explanation. This could happen either because they did not know how to express their feelings or because it was just an event in their lives that they haven't given much thought to.

It is important to comment that, when asked the participants "*Do you think every man wants to become a father?*" half of them (52%) thought that fatherhood is not every man's dream or objective in life. Even a third of the teenagers (33%) expressed that there are cases in which a woman becomes pregnant to "trap" the man, while 5% of them strongly believed this situation to be true. This information reflects the lack of responsibility teenage boys can have when faced with a pregnancy, tending to blame "the manipulative woman", for their lack of precaution.

Considering this information, it would have been interesting to find how many young men could have felt trapped by their female partners. Although that information was not gathered, this research shows that ten female participants

(with a mean age of 17 years old) were abandoned and that four male partners, suggested an abortion. This information could indicate that, if someone was “trapped” here, it was really the young woman. Those adolescent boys who did not want a pregnancy at this moment in their lives, argued that the baby would frustrate many of their plans (34%), talked about their fear of not having a good and stable economic situation to offer to their partner and new-born baby (21%), referred to their young age to father a child (19%) or to their unwillingness to deal with the responsibility at this moment in their lives (17%). A lower percentage of adolescents (4%) alluded to a conflicting family situation at the moment of the pregnancy -which would probably worsen- with the coming of a new baby. Finally few interviewees (4%) mentioned their lack of emotional readiness for such an experience.

“I did wish to have a child of hers but I am too young and, economically and as a person, I am not ready. One is never ready to be a father” (Macbeth, 20 years old).

“No, I did not want a pregnancy at this time because we had in mind to continue with our studies” (Alejandro, 18 years old).

“Because I do not have a stable job, we were too young and there are problems with her family” (Rogelio, 20 years old).

“No, because I wanted to do well and have a stable economic situation without the responsibility on top of me” (José, 17 years old).

### **7.7. - Importance of children within the couple**

As mentioned in the literature review, the problem of infertility can lead to divorce and ostracism (Pearce, 1999; Unisa, 1999; Mamdani, 1972). This study shows a significant percentage of both teenage girls and boys, who would change their minds when considering marrying someone, if she/he cannot have children. When adolescents were asked if *a man would marry a woman after knowing that she could not have any children*, a significant percentage of participants (43% female and 49% of male) argued that a man would not marry her. Following the same theme, when participants were asked if *a woman*

would leave her partner if she knew, before getting married, that he could not have children, again almost half of the female interviewees (54%) and more than half the young men (45%) responded that the woman would no longer marry him. Most 76% of the young women (76%) and men (71%) mentioned that there is a better chance that a man would leave his partner if she does not want to have children. This could be understood, on one hand by the importance of a man showing his manhood through fatherhood and, on the other hand, by the fact that the woman could be perceived as more submissive and tolerant. When asking; *“What would your partner think if you decided not to have any children?”* followed by the next options of response offered to them; *“She would support you respecting your decision”*, *“She would get angry”*, *“She would be disappointed”* *“She would not care”* or *“She would leave you”*. More teenage girls than boys (80% vs. 69%) believed that their partner would have a negative response toward that situation. It was interesting to notice that twice as many teenage girls than boys (30% vs. 16%) feared abandonment from their partners if they decided not to have children. Both teenagers agreed with the chance of disappointing their partners (30% of young women vs. 33% of men) followed by, anger (mentioned by 20% of both gender participants). Twice as many teenage boys (27%) than girls (13%) believed their partner would support them in their decision while almost twice as many young women (7%) than men (4%) believed that their partner would not care. Therefore, the findings show that young women do not seem to believe that their partners would support them in this decision, as much as, the men believe the woman would.

## **7.8. - Conclusion**

As the information presented shows, the value of a pregnancy is indeed “enhanced” by different dominant discourses, related to the status and power thought to be gained by the adolescents within their relationship and in society. Most teenagers’ conception of being a woman or a man is related to procreation and taking care of their family. As Foucault (1978) identified, through the process of replicating dominant discourses and incorporating them into one’s individual understanding of the world (“discourses of the self”), these

adolescents seem to regulate their own behaviour to build a sense of identity that fits into the norm and resembles the social and gendered expected behaviours, discourses and attitudes. For most young girls, motherhood is a woman's source of worth, respect, status and social recognition. They believe that, through motherhood, they do not only reinforce their relationship with their partners but will have someone to live for and someone who will always love them. Therefore the power of young mothers is centred on her role as wife and caregiver as "traditional normative prescriptions" (Harris *et al.* 2000:386) dominate. The dominant discourses which governed the concept of fatherhood in this study centered on the reaffirmation of a teenage boy's manhood; by proving he can have children, insuring his partners' love, as well as, her emotional dependence on him and, becoming the economic provider for his family, as expected of 'a man'. In addition to this, a child becomes a satisfaction in many teenage boys' lives, as well as an avenue to gain privileges and a space and status within their family and their community, that otherwise would be denied to them.

It is very important however to highlight that, as Butler (1993) theorizes, gender performative- a performance that usually is not a voluntary decision- are culturally constructed acts through repetition. There are specific expectations and behaviour of what it means to be a woman/mother and a man/father in a Mexican culture that are clearly expressed in this chapter and that have a strong influence on many teenage unplanned pregnancies, since half of the male adolescents mentioned that they did not want to have a child at that moment in their lives. For them, a pregnancy during their teenage years, is more of a burden than a satisfaction; they felt their plans got frustrated and they did not feel ready economically or emotionally for such a responsibility. Moreover, a strong percentage of both young women and men in this study, viewed the pregnancy and childbirth as a stressful events that introduced them into a more limiting lifestyle, with less freedom and fun. However, the pregnancy ends up being shaped by all the dominant discourses that have been incorporated into these adolescents' understanding of the world and therefore turn motherhood and fatherhood into an intelligible valid and meaningful event.

## CHAPTER VIII. - DISCUSSION

### 8.1. - Introduction

This study analyses how teenagers' views of sexual intercourse and parenthood are linked to dominant discourses of gender and the expectations that accompany these in terms of masculinity and femininity, and how these are used to construct the meaning of a sexual relationship and parenthood. The study also intends to identify behaviours which are resistant to and/or accommodating to traditional discourses in order to “engage empirically in finding ways to identify examples of more sustained agentic practice as well as exploring possible reasons for such practice becoming embedded” (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2010:331).

Using a mixed methodology design influenced by constructivist, qualitative, feminist post- structural and gender category approaches, I described in Chapter III<sup>11</sup> the main historical trends that have constructed sexuality in Mexico, as well as the dominant discourses that tend to define it. It is within these social discourses that interviewees built their identities and gave meaning to their sexual experiences. In this Chapter I will link some of the central themes and arguments in this thesis, reflecting on the methodological and theoretical contributions it has made to the understanding of teenage pregnancy and outlining their implications for different aspects of social inquiry.

Therefore, the information obtained in this study- as my contribution to Knowledge, in section 8.3 will show- answers my following research questions:

- 1) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views on their own identities?

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<sup>11</sup> Literature Review: Influences of gender and Culture in conceptions of teenage pregnancy.

- 2) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses on masculinity and femininity that influence their views on the value of young women's education and work?
- 3) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and practices of sexuality?
- 4) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and uses of contraception?
- 5) How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views of parenthood and especially motherhood?

## **8.2. - About the method**

As I discussed in Chapter IV<sup>12</sup>, I was working at a Government Hospital in Mexico City on a project for the Department of Adolescence. This is why part of my research has the quantitative method already chosen by the director of the Department. The closed questions used in the instrument developed, were important for my study since they gathered information and created a profile of the adolescent population seeking the programme. The programme from this department provides family planning services and gives information that addresses teenagers' reproductive and sexual health needs mostly due to unplanned pregnancy.

My theoretical framework concerning gender and sexuality, discussed in Chapters I, II and III establishes the importance of exploring how young people

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<sup>12</sup> Methodology

are shaped by and are themselves shaping the discursive context in which they are having sex and forming intimate relationships. Following this theoretical framework, I created additional semi-structured-open and open questions -that I included in the instrument- intending to explore the social construction and representations of teenagers' sexuality and the ways in which they practice it, based largely on those constructions and dominant discourses (see Appendix I). The qualitative part therefore, became, linked to my definition of sexuality and gender, as socially constructed and turned the final instrument into a highly structured interview protocol. One of the strengths of the instrument is that it was not self-completing- a situation which allowed me to adjust it whenever needed- to the adolescents' views and discourses, by adding categories and writing verbatim what they wanted to express. This flexibility gave me the possibility of exploring how cultural expectations and dominant discourses- transmitted to them by society- interact to form the adolescents' views and guide their behaviour.

This research is a "snapshot" of adolescents' views on gender discourses in sexuality, contraception, pregnancy and parenthood, at a particular time. The period of collection of the information was from 1994-1997. Although this was both a long time ago and specific to a particular area of Mexico, I do not intend to represent young mothers in general, however, I draw on findings from different studies, in different countries (Phoenix, 1992; Szasz, 1998a; Amuchástegui, 1999; Alldred and David, 2007; Maxwell and Aggleton 2010; Coria, 2014) and identify similar themes and show that my sample is not uncommon.

The capture and processing of the opened and closed questions, of both young men and women's structured interviews, was done using the SPSS statistic package (1999). Furthermore, in order to facilitate the handling and interpretation of the qualitative information, all the answers were first transcribed in a document under their respective questions. Due to the amount of information gathered, five attempts were needed to accurately categorize the

answers through an interpretative discourse lens to analyse them statistically further on.

### **8.3. - My contribution to knowledge**

Although the information provided in my study refers mainly to the years 1994-1997- it is important to highlight that based on the World Bank report (2012) Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is the region with the highest teenage fertility rate (72 births per 1000) among adolescents aged 15 to 19. Talking specifically about Mexico, this country is at the top of the list for adolescent pregnancy among the countries members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2014). One in six childbirths in this country is from teenage girls aged 15 to 19 (CONAPO, 2014).

In Mexico there have been nearly 40 years of health programmes, which have not rendered significant results in lowering the percentage of teenage pregnancy in this country (Lovera, 2015), which demonstrates how salient these issues remain to this day. To be more specific, based on the National Strategy to prevent Teenage Pregnancy (ENPEA)'s document presented by the Presidency of Mexico, between 1976 and 2013, twenty-one federal programmes have been developed to prevent teenage pregnancies, without any effective results (Peña Nieto, 2015). As recently as 2013, 467,000 children under 20 had a baby; this figure includes 11,000 girls 10-14 years old who became mothers during that year (CASALUD, 2015). What is noteworthy is that arguments included in their report cite the social, cultural and health risks linked to teenage pregnancy, arguing that these young girls are not physically or mentally prepared for pregnancy and babies (CASALUD, 2015) which strongly resonates with the findings of this study.

In addition to this, after two decades of formally promoting gender equity by the Mexican State - a commitment acquired after the signing of the Declaration and Platform of Action of Beijing- many of the problems that women face have actually become worse. Among others, the violence against women (Reyna Quiroz, 2015; CONAPRED, 2015), teenage pregnancy and the number of

women who live in poverty (CONEVAL, 2014) have increased. Likewise, trends in women decision-taking rights and in the elimination of sexist stereotypes have intensified (Zamora Márquez, 2015; CONAPRED, 2015). Data from the Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) show that, although in Mexico women represent more than half of the population, they suffer discrimination due to their gender and the feminine stereotypes that have been constructed socially. This discrimination originated due to a series of prejudices and stereotypes concerning the role women within society, causes psychological, physical, economic and sexual violence which in most cases still seems invisible (INEGI, 2013). Recent studies have also shown the influence of roles and gender stereotypes, which in a sexual context make adolescent girls and boys, feel they have to behave according to their own expectations of their gender roles (El Confidencial, 2014). Rodríguez San Julián and Megías Quiros (2015) found that adolescents from their study continue to maintain gender roles and beliefs that perpetuate inequality, usually at the expense of young women and maintained often by both genders. In this study, sexist comments come as “normal”. These stereotypes -or gender dominant discourses- are what is considered an important cause of high rates of teenage pregnancy in my work.

It was just this last January 2015 that in Mexico, the Federal Government launched the National Strategy for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ENPEA), the primary objective of which is to reduce by 50% the pregnancy rate of adolescents between 15 and 19 by 2030, which again suggests that my older findings remain very relevant in today’s context. For the first time, a framework was created to respond to human rights, particularly sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents with an inclusive vision of gender, but whether this will achieve success against the types of issues identified in this thesis, remains to be seen (Ortega, 2015).

This National Strategy has the following intersectional lines of action (CONAPO, 2014):

- 1) To assure that teenage boys and girls finish their Compulsory Education, which in Mexico covers two levels: elementary school (six years) and middle school (three years),
- 2) To generate labour opportunities for the young population,
- 3) To maintain massive communication campaigns providing clear messages concerning adolescents' sexual and reproductive health,
- 4) To strengthen the prevention and attention of violence and sexual abuse towards girls, boys and adolescents,
- 5) To guarantee the provision of health services,
- 6) To guarantee the training to have qualified educators, teachers, health staff, parents, community leaders and finally
- 7) To strength youth leadership.

However, as this information shows, what is problematic is that there is not a specific point of action that focuses on gender issues and especially on the way dominant discourses shape adolescents' lives. There is neither a focus on changing the ways femininity and masculinity that have perpetuated woman's discrimination.

Likewise, Mexican Official data report that 80% of teenage parents drop out of their education due to a pregnancy (CASALUD, 2015). However, as this study shows, most of the teenagers have often left school before the pregnancy. When considering work opportunities, their argument is based on the belief that when the educational aspirations of the teenagers are cut off, their employment opportunities in a globalized economy are significantly reduced. The report specifies that the technical skills acquired through education, are the only thing that gives them access to better employment and income opportunities

(CASALUD, 2015). These arguments stress the lack of employment opportunities, but do not adequately consider the importance of the cultural factors shaped by dominant gender discourses related to the gender division of labour, which continues to persist. As mentioned in the literature review, during the 80's Clara Coria (2014) was interested in finding out if, women who seemed to have the resources of empowerment -this is to say, the bare minimum to become masters of themselves, of their decisions and choices, autonomous, capable of relating economically without harmful dependencies, with access to university degrees and labour market opportunities- were really so. She found that both men and women perceived as natural the differentiated and unequal use of the money and, recognized that in the power relation money is a male resource. This situation prevented women from achieving such desired autonomy. Consequently, the sole fact of having access to money did not mean for many young women, that they have been able to modify the models of male dominated power that they have internalised.

Considering all of the above, this thesis is an important contribution to the way teenage pregnancy should be viewed and handled in reproductive health programmes. This evidences how stereotypical gender discourses shape attitudes and the need to target these discourses if change is to happen.

My study contributes to the burgeoning international literature on social, economic, gender and sexual influences on adolescents' sexual development and identities. It provides information about the discourses that construct the social milieu in which young women and men have been socialized. It is this cultural environment – seldom considered in this country with the relevance it has - which is considered a key factor for understanding adolescents' sexual meanings, behaviour and motivations, as well as, their attitudes relating to sexuality, contraception and parenthood.

Many previous studies, in their quest for explanations about youth's inability to use family planning methods, have failed to explain why information is not enough to foster the use of contraception. I offer key information about the role

that power dynamics of gendered subjectivities and dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity- and not solely the biology and/or the knowledge or lack of it in the use of contraception- play in the understanding of teenage pregnancies. This study shows that a significant number of adolescents- caught in a conflict between what is expected and what participants feel should change- tend to end up supporting and reproducing, to a great degree, the gender discourses imposed and transmitted by society and its institutions. This work also addresses questions of the interaction between social, gender, sexual and emotional developments.

Moreover, my findings suggest that much of the young women's personal, sexual and contraceptive behaviour is indirectly determined by their views - sometimes not very accurate- of young men's attitudes, desires and expectations within the relationship, largely based on dominant discourses and male heterosexuality and expected femininity. This is why there was a particular interest in obtaining information, not only about teenagers' own views, but also about what they believe, the general normative gendered views men in general have about the topics covered here.

### **8.3.1. - Binaries and Hierarchies of Femininity and Masculinity in Mexico**

The findings presented in Chapter V<sup>13</sup> helped answer my first research question; "How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views on their own identities?"

This chapter shows how gendered discourses- defined by Mexican society- associated with being a woman or a man, continue to be governed largely by gender expectations organised around binary and hierarchical constructions of femininity and masculinity. Even when considering the wish for a first-born baby's gender, boys were preferred because they are "the most important" (Carmela, 15 years old), "have greater possibilities of being accepted and doing whatever they want" (Lourdes, 17 years old), they are considered tough,

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13 Gender discourses: Exploring teen's talk about binaries and hierarchies of femininity and masculinity in Mexico

independent, invulnerable, “the house’s pillar” and “the future economic providers for parents in old age”. As Laura (16 years old) states: “I want a boy because maybe he can support me economically when his father dies”. Girls, on the other hand, were preferred due to the fact that “they help with the housework” (Maria de Jesus, 14 years old), are emotional companions and “support their mothers more” (Wendy, 18 years old) and are more loyal, complacent or easier to communicate with.

When considering the sex of the first-born child in this work, almost half of both male and female participants- contrary to what other studies have found (Ortíz Ortega *et al.* 1998; García and De Oliveira, 1994; Sternberg, 2000)- would prefer to have a baby girl. However, it is relevant to highlight, that adolescent boys’ percentage rose significantly when faced with the possibility of only having same sex children in the family; under these circumstances, most of the interviewees preferred to have only boys rather than girls.

To be a man in this research was associated with discourses of traditional “*Machismo*”<sup>14</sup>; the man is the one who should be the head of the household, procreator, stronger and superior to a woman, with freedom to do as he pleases inside and outside the family home, including having a risky life style (alcohol, wild parties etc.). As Susana (18 years old) described her partner; “Yes. He is a macho man. He used to say that the man always has to be “el que lleva los pantalones” [the one who wears the trousers, which in a figurative sense means to be in control and authority]”. Coria (2014) found that the situation has not changed much for many Mexican women over the last 25 years. The greater obstacle for women resides -this author expressed- in their difficulty to give up their role as mothers and emotional caregivers, which is the base of the ideal femininity. On the other hand, she argues that the obstacle for many men lies in their inability to give up the patriarchal hierarchy model which defines them as providers and that puts them in a position to always having to have more; more erections, more money, greater knowledge, more authority etc., in order not to risk being considered less of a man. Coria therefore states, that young

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14 See Chapter II

women and men continue perpetuating traditional concepts and ways in their practices with money and its distribution, because the model of implicit power that it conveys has not changed.

However, it is important to highlight that, in this work, the conception of manhood also includes positive discourses of what Arciniega (2008) calls *Caballerismo*<sup>15</sup>. *Caballerismo* is a positive image of a man as the family provider who respects and cares for his family, carrying out financial responsibilities. It depicts Mexican American men as chivalrous, nurturing and noble, independent, assertive, mature and protective. These kinds of men, in Arciniega's study felt valued in their family relationships and were in touch with their feelings and the feelings of others. For example, when Pedro (19 years old) described a man sexually speaking, he referred to an individual who would "have satisfaction knowing that one makes a woman happy". Likewise, these men also displayed more practical ways of solving their problems leaving aggressiveness aside. The discourses found here, as Maxwell also observed in her study, describe teenage boys "as having emotional, not only sexual, needs and projected onto their female partners a significant personalized and active function, not apparent in their objectifying statements made about women more generally" (Maxwell, 2007:545). It is important to understand that this heroic image of manhood still positions men as saviours and constructs ideas about protection and power (and women's reliance upon men) that potentially robs girls and women from developing their autonomy and independence.

On the other hand, many discourses expressed by both male and female interviewees, when investigating what it means to be a woman, reflected the impact of discrimination that some Mexican teenagers faced growing up. Discrimination that describes them – and many teenage girls support it- as weak, dependent individuals, whose value relies on their physical appearance (Thorne, 1993; Sternberg, 2000), their virginity (Petchesky 1998;

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15 See Arciniega et al., (2008) in Chapter II.

Amuchástegui, 1999) and their ability to take care of children, husband/partner and the house (Medrano, 1994; De Oliveira 1998). Even more disturbing is the fact that again, this “emphasized femininity” (Connell, 1987) seems to have been internalized and appears as natural, easily fitting into the norm (Davison & Frank, 2006). This seems to be the young women’s strategy of “adaptation” (Kimmel, 2008) or way of managing their sexual reputations by colluding with their sexual partners in the reproduction of men’s power (Holland *et al.* 1998). In addition to this, almost half the adolescent girls and 12% of the boys argued that women have a worse quality of life expectation, suffer more and life is more difficult for them. As Gerardo (20 years old) mentioned when explaining why he wanted his child to be a boy: “they have less problems. Woman’s life is harder. Since childhood they oppress her and repress her. Men have more liberties and one doesn’t worry so much about him”. Or as Lourdes (17 years old) also stated: “They have greater possibilities to be accepted, to do whatever they want, not to suffer so much”.

This information is relevant to the central point of this work since for many, the advantage of being a woman is motherhood and the relationship with a man, even among those participants who showed ambivalent views. As my findings indicate, there are many teenage girls -more than boys- who are still blindly engaging in ‘discourses of the self’ to regulate their own behaviour and construct a sense of feminine identity (Foucault, 1980). Moreover, what seems to be more important to these young women is the way they appear to young men, as well as their attractiveness to them, which defines how they feel about their life choices (Ringrose, 2008). It is very important to consider these findings in educational programmes, to help young girls find different discourses that can shape their lives and construct a feminine identity, that not only relies on motherhood and on being someone’s partner or wife, to become someone in society.

As this study shows, some teenage girls are resisting “emphasized femininity” (Connell, 1987) and are trying to build a different feminine identity, by struggling between traditional models and developing ones, negotiating in and around

culturally rooted notions of femininity, trying to create new ones to satisfy their own and others' expectations about what it means to be a woman (Currie *et al.* 2007; Deirdre *et al.* 2005; Denner and Dunbar, 2004). These participants are taking forms of action in order to win freedom from and within prevailing social relations, or as Renold and Ringrose (2008) would explain it, are showing possibilities for 'rupture' of normative or traditional gender discourses. An example of this would be Martha (17 years old) who explained:

“It is a pride to be a woman. There are people that classify women as people who do not know how to do things. This is not true. We can be better than men”.

Likewise, although few, there were some young women in my study who appeared to relatively successfully embody the idea of sexual being with her own beliefs and practices within their sexual and intimate relationships, regardless of the influence of gender dominant discourses that they had internalized since childhood. Likewise, few showed a sustained agentic approach to other parts of their lives, such as education and work.

Nonetheless, what is noteworthy is that most of the teenagers who seemed to be questioning or trying to break the normative or traditional gender discourses, were still engaged in what Maxwell and Aggleton (2010: 341) call “agentic practices”. These teenage girls, although drawing on the idea of themselves as powerful, showed discourses that demonstrated few moments of agency since they apparently accepted young men who would be dominant to them.

In summary, although an important percentage of teenage girls seemed to have been able to fight against the normative traditional gender discourses imposed on them, there are still a majority -more teenage girls than boys- who, as Davison and Frank (2006:152) state, uncritically engaged in 'discourses of the self' to regulate their own behaviour and construct a sense of feminine and masculine identity (Foucault, 1980) that appears to 'make sense' and fit what is being demanded of them. Likewise, there are significant continuities around gendered power. The dominant conceptions of masculinity are being

negotiated and transformed by many teenage boys since there is a wider openness to perceive young women as having the same rights and opportunities as men. However, this is only so for most young men, as long as they do not question the hierarchical patriarchal family organization, organised through gender binary constructs. Both education and work are valued in terms of the degree in which they are needed for the purpose of the well being of the family. This is to say, since men are the main providers of the family income, there seems not be a reasonable explanation for women's education above a certain grade (usually from middle school to high school). Likewise, work outside the house is valued as long as the young woman does not neglect her duties at home.

### **8.3.2. - Education and work**

Regarding education, the apparent gender balance in Mexican schools should be interpreted prudently. Although girls and young women have the same legal rights to participate actively in education, their actual participation in this field is limited. Poverty not only plays a relevant role in education in this country, but it also has an important weight in girls' schooling.

With the information obtained in this research, to conclude that pregnancy is the largest single cause of school dropouts in Mexico would be a mistake. This study shows, that many adolescent mothers, dropped out before becoming pregnant. To be more specific, 63% of the young women interviewed had left school before the pregnancy. The young women from my sample had studied an average of 8.33 school years and men had been in school an average of 9.38 school years. My findings also show that it is only for the teenage girls who had reached high school, that the pregnancy could have been the reason for them to leave school- even when 33% of them were not studying at the moment of the news.

Besides these figures, my second research question intended to determine, "How teenagers are shaped by gendered dominant discourses on masculinity

and femininity that influence their views on the value of young women's education and work". My findings show that most female (70%) and male (67%) participants were positive about education; most had ideas of continuing their schooling when the baby reached a certain age. However, as Alldred and David (2007) highlight, it is important to situate these teenagers' decisions about participating in education or employment "in the actual context of their lives and seeing them embedded in family and other gendered relationships with the interdependencies these entail" (2007:131). Young women's education at the time of the interview was not considered to be relevant to many teenage participants, and when it was, it was viewed - by a third of the teenage boys - as an avenue for the young woman to acquire skills that would make her take better care of her husband and her children. As two male participants stated, the young woman by studying,; "will understand her partner more" or she could "give her son/daughter more knowledge". Many adolescent girls from this study had also internalized the lack of importance of education. Most of them (67%) believed men are not interested in young women's level of education, since they are strongly influenced by gender discourses that value a woman for her role within the house. As Karina explained; "If she is not studying, she can take care of/serve him when he arrives". Just less than a third of them, consider that young men value a woman's education because, by studying, they believe she shows a desire to do better and become a better-educated and knowledgeable individual.

This study also shows there are two main dominant discourses influencing the value of a woman's education and work opportunity; man's hierarchical position within the relationship and the gender division of labour. There were still many teenagers who believed that certain fields or careers did not suit women with children and could cause serious problems within the relationship. Moreover, the conflicts perceived had clearly to do with assigned gendered discourses and male dominance that could cause quarrels, arguments, power struggles, violent episodes and breakup. Young women's schooling can make the man "feel less of a person" (Karina, 15 years old) and make the teenage girl "feel she has more rights" (Esperanza, 16 years old). Likewise, if the young woman engages

in certain studies or job opportunities, the man may feel “she might cheat on him” (Luis, 18 years old). Women’s degree of education seems to be inversely proportional to men’s self-esteem and to his hierarchical position over her, which makes schooling and work threatening and unnecessary. Hence, in order to maintain the stability in the relationship, as Isabel (15 years old) explained; “The man should know more than the woman and should be *‘el que manda’* (the one in charge)”. As this information shows, the conceptions of masculinity have not been transformed in a significant way towards recognizing the positive aspect of school in woman’s lives and -whenever this aspect is considered- it is related to the benefit it would provide to the man and the family, when and only when, it does not alter the couple’s hierarchical position. It is worrisome that just one participant of each gender considered education as an avenue for young women to become independent and self-sufficient. This is not surprising considering the few opportunities that school offers to many underprivileged young women, as Chapter II shows.

On the other hand, adolescent girls from this study demonstrated that they are still having problems defining themselves as economically independent from men. Most male and female participants appear to uncritically engage in gendered dominant discourses to build an identity that seems to fit in what is being demanded of them (Davison and Frank, 2006). Nearly all teenage boys and girls based their answers on dominant discourses associated with the division of labour by gender, when describing responsible woman and man. Since men are the ones who will provide income -as dominant discourses dictate- there seems not be a reasonable explanation for young women to continue their education above a certain grade (usually from middle school to high school). Likewise, as my findings show, a fifth of the young women seemed to consider that a school degree in a teenage girl’s life is irrelevant, since many regarded the home as their main domain and motherhood as their reason for being. As Raul (17 years old) stated: “The obligation to provide belongs to the man and the woman is there to take care of him, the children and the house”. As mentioned previously, similar findings were recognized by Coria (2014). This author argues that, even when in the last decades some women

have greater access to the acquisition of money through work, money still has a sexual gender, one that continues to be masculine. Coria also argues that it is not a matter of a confrontation between women and men but a fight to perpetuate an authoritarian and hierarchical model in which both women and men end up trapped; men resist the loss of privileges that come with masculinity and women resist avoiding the conflicts that come with economic independence and the concepts of ideal femininity.

Important information from my findings is that many young women think men are more sexist and more traditional than they really are. This might be due to the gender discourses they have assimilated and the gender discrimination they have suffered since childhood. The fact that there were more teenage boys than girls who showed a greater change in views and ideas concerning women's education and degree of preparation for future life, should be interpreted carefully. This is so because these different views do not free young women from their domestic responsibilities and many young men are not yet fully willing to share them. Therefore this more liberal way of thinking seems just to put more responsibilities on young women's lives (Ringrose, 2012). Moreover, it is important to highlight that often, when the idea of equality in education and work opportunities is considered, it is only when the level of preparation or salary reached by the young woman does not "disturb" the existing gender hierarchy within the couple. Therefore, it was not surprising to find that, although few young women did, none of the teenage boys expressed the importance of a young woman being economically independent.

Considering this internalization of gender discourses and expectations, it is not surprising to find that- although a high percentage of both teenage girls and boys seemed to approve young women's freedom to study and do better in life- very few female participants were studying at the time of the interview and none of them were working outside the home. As Coria (2014) suggests, significant changes will only take place, when the model of power - incorporated within the adolescents own subjectivity- is revised and teenagers find a way (or are

helped by government programmes to find it) to move from dependence to shared autonomy.

### **8.3.3. - Sexuality**

As Chapter VI<sup>16</sup> shows, sexuality is another area strongly influenced by cultural aspects and dominant discourses. It is important however, to consider that results from this study could be influenced by the fact that free union (couple living together but not married) was the most common form of union among the couples, and that the teenagers interviewed were already facing a pregnancy. Therefore, their situation placed them in a different position- one in which their views about sexuality and contraception, expected to be more liberal- might differ from the rest of the adolescent population.

This Chapter dealt with my third research question: “How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and practices of sexuality?” The prevalence of a sexual “double standard” (Holland et al. 1998), as my findings show, is still very much in play and understood by my participants. Many regard sexual activity as a prerogative of masculinity while female sexuality is limiting and oppressing young women as well as strongly subject to moral judgement. As Erica explained:

“The man can have sex because he is a man and he can do as he jolly well pleases (“hace lo que se le pega la gana”). The woman has to be careful in face of society because if she doesn’t, everybody will want to have sex with her, will be disrespectful to her and men will no longer have good intentions towards her” (Erica, 18 years old).

While active sexuality defines a man’s identity, female participants did not refer to their sexual practices to define their identities, rather they appeared to comply with dominant moral expectations of femininity, and a more passive sexuality defined mainly through motherhood, as showed in Chapter VII. In this

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<sup>16</sup> Mexican teen’s conceptions of sexuality and contraception

research, almost half of the male participants described themselves- sexually speaking- as being the ones “in control” and responsible for taking the initiative in the sexual act, capable of having an erection, achieving penetration, procreating or producing a child, making the decisions and having greater sexual experience. As Szasz found, “having an erection and penetration are regarded as the most valuable forms of male sexual expression and there is a close, symbolic connection between these biological behaviours and masculinity” (Szasz, 1998a: 98). Likewise, young men perceived the young woman as a person with as many rights as men to want to have sex for pleasure, only when a more intimate relationship is considered.

It was interesting to note that young men appeared to be less critical of liberal views related to young women’s sexuality and sexual knowledge, while young women seem to be more hooked on dominant discourses. For example, teenage girls -in greater number than young men- still considered the preservation of virginity as fundamental to their social status- a socio-sexual expectation which contributes to their vulnerability. As Janet stated:

“The man doesn’t lose anything [by having premarital sex] and the woman does lose her dignity if she is not a virgin. The woman loses her virginity and if she ever marries, the man notices that she is not worth it anymore” (Janet, 18 years old).

This study presents different competing discourses. On the one hand there are traditional and religiously influenced views, which uphold catholic moral values regarding female virginity highly. On the other hand more young people are challenging these views, and starting to question the split image of a woman into virgin or whore. However, it is interesting to notice that for most teenage girls in this study, the young woman’s reputation is damaged, not because she has premarital sex but because she has sex before being sure the man will marry her. Apparently, premarital sex does not seem so important to many, as long as a union or marriage is seriously considered. As Martha explained regarding teenage girls:

“Intercourse should happen with just one person. If they are boyfriend and girlfriend and they are thinking about getting married, and they are sure about it, they can have sex before getting married” (Martha, 17 years old).

My findings also show that although both young men and women appeared to recognise teenage girls as sexual beings- with needs and desires- there were inconsistencies that it is important to highlight and that show that the adolescents’ resistance to ‘dominant discourses of heterosexuality’ (Allen, 2003), is vulnerable:

- a) While most teenage girls- compared to just a third of the boys- defended the idea of sexual equality in terms of desire and pleasure, just a small percentage of both gender participants believed that sex could be more important to women than to men.
- b) When studying sexual pleasure in young women, different responses were found depending on the way the questions were asked. When participants were questioned, if a young woman who has sex for pleasure and not to have children is a “bad woman”, a strong majority expressed their disagreement to this statement. However, when the respondents were asked this same question but directed to what “a man” would think, half of both teenage girls and boys answered that the woman would be considered a “loose woman”. This might be so because, although some female and male teenagers appeared to have less traditional views, many of them did believe that men in general, still engage in dominant discourses that “fit into the norm” and resemble the “accepted” social and gendered behaviour, discourses and attitudes.

It is important to highlight that young women from this research were strongly influenced by their partners’ views, a situation that constrains their possibilities of choice or agency. Regardless of this information, a relevant finding from my work is that, close to forty percent of male adolescents were starting to take into consideration the woman’s needs and her sexual satisfaction. They expressed

concern about aspects such as, “being responsible for satisfying the woman”; “supporting her sexually” and “giving her love and making her feel protected during the sexual act”.

These findings show that teenagers – more women than men- are still shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and practices of sexuality. They are invested in discourses that privilege male sexual power and desires, illustrating that the prevalence of a double standard is still assumed. Most of the changes in views seem to be accompanied by “conditions” which shows how fragile the adolescents’ resistance to traditional gender norms and discourses still is. For example, only when a more intimate relationship is considered, a woman is perceived as a person with as many rights as men to have sex for pleasure. Likewise, sex can be viewed as being equally important to a woman as to a man, but never more important. Regardless of the resistance found in many participants, the information suggests that young women were still constrained in their possibilities of agency. The view that most young men still engage in dominant discourses, in addition to the fact that an important percentage of young women from this research are still strongly influenced by their partners’ views, limits their possibility of real change in attitudes and gendered behaviour.

#### **8.3.4. - Contraception**

The complex dynamics of gendered subjectivities, not only influence sexuality but notions and practices regarding contraception too. Although the lack of knowledge about family planning methods and how they are used, were found to be causes believed to influence the lack of use among many participants, it is important to highlight two other main reasons which are significant barriers to their use; the erroneous beliefs about contraception and the gendered dominant discourses. The reported misperceptions about contraception that negatively influence the woman’s and the couple’s decision to use family planning methods in this study, are not different from those already found in other studies (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Greenstreet and Banibensu 1997; Castle *et al.*

1999 and Chandra-Mouli *et al.* 2014), fear of believed side effects such as “infertility”, “cancer”, kidney problems, abortion, damage to the baby or the woman’s uterus, emotional problems such as nervousness or mood swings, physical problems such as allergies, weight gain and headaches among others. Rafael (20 years old) even mentioned among the reasons for psychological problems the “guilty feelings because of religious or social beliefs”. Paola (20 years old) stated that “contraceptives can damage the baby’s uterus” and Jesús explained that:

“Contraceptives are fine but if people don’t know how to use them, they can pass an illness to the child. He can be born with an embolism or with the contraceptive stocked to his body” (Jesús, 18 years old).

The misconceptions found in this research had to do with all the family planning methods such as Injections, IUD, Norplant and even sometimes vasectomy. Sterility was mainly mentioned when referring to the Pill. However the greater reactions were towards the condom, which is, not surprisingly, the only male contraceptive mentioned in this study. All these misconceptions -but especially those concerning the condom (since it is the contraceptive that is more accessible to young people)- should seriously be considered for policies, as mentioned in my practical considerations below.

The other reasons presented in Chapter VI, respond to my fourth research question; “How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their ideas and uses of contraception?” When inquiring about the non-use of contraception specifically by young women, the reasons most frequently mentioned- by more teenage girls than boys- were clearly influenced by gendered dominant discourses. Reasons such as the wish to become a mother, the man’s opposition or fear of making him angry, the view that men are the ones who use contraceptives and take care of the woman, the belief that the young woman’s intention is to trap the man, as well as social constraints, since it is not considered appropriate for a young woman to use contraception. My findings show that a fifth of the teenage boys and 14% of the girls argued that, men in general, consider the use of

contraception by women as something that can be judged negatively; the young woman can be regarded as someone who has already had sexual experience with other men or as a “loose” or “easy” woman who could be looked down on and gossiped about. These answers are not surprising considering these teenagers’ social milieu, together with the fact that until 1973, Mexican women required their partners’ approval to use contraception. There were relevant findings in this study that are worth highlighting, since they enlighten common misunderstandings around contraception, as well as some misbeliefs and complex dynamics of gendered subjectivities, which interfere with the use of contraception.

1) Even when the woman is the one who uses contraception, there is still rejection towards it. This is a relevant finding that can have far reaching repercussions on teenage pregnancy, and shows how dominant discourses have strongly influenced misconceptions that extend not only to the condom, but also to any other family planning method.

My findings show that an important majority of male (54%) and female (76%) interviewees believed that if a woman uses contraception, man’s sexual desire decreases because men, as Karina (15 years old) stated, “feel less sexual desire towards that person who is using contraception”. Likewise, the fear of the contraceptive damaging their relationship and making them risk losing their man makes the option not a valid one, as Virginia explained:

“The man does not keep on loving her the same because, if she takes care of herself [using contraception] it is because she does not want to have children with him” (Virginia, 13 years old).

Strikingly, the teenage girls who felt this way were among the youngest of the sample. This is believed to be due to the greater impact of power in gender relationships, when girls are involved in sexual intercourse at earlier ages, among under-privileged and less educated young women (Miller and Benson, 2001). These girls, due to their young age and lesser education, are presumed to be more naïve, more credulous and therefore easily influenced by their partners- usually older than them- and by gendered dominant discourses. As

Lico and Luttrell (2011) explain, “our identities are formed by multiple and sometimes competing images and voices about who we are, how we should look and feel, what we should want for ourselves, who we should associate with and so forth” (2011:673). Perhaps then, we see a conflict or competing discourses where the strong need to please her man and avoid any kind of fight that could make her lose him, are stronger than her wish for using contraception to increase her autonomy and perhaps sexual pleasure. The competing demands can sabotage her agency and her possibility to have a voice within the relationship.

2) A fifth of the male and a third of the female participants thought men do not like their partners to use contraception and therefore, reactions such as anger, disappointment and threat of abandonment, could be expected if the woman decides to protect herself. As Bianca (15 years old) expressed: “women fear that their husbands may create a big scandal. They fear he may hit them or leave them [if they use contraception]”. These findings illustrate that, at its most extreme, “*machismo*” maintains asymmetrical power within men and women’s relationships. The need to be in control of young women can cause violence by masculine young men to exert such control. This is a clear example of why Butler insists on a performative understanding of gender -since the performance of gender itself creates gender as it is embodied and lived-. Power works and shapes, as she explains, our understanding of womanhood [and manhood] in society.

As Stevens points out, “*machismo*” is the “cult of virility” (1976:90). Men’s power is a learned behaviour, a privilege, a reward, earned or arbitrary, granted and taken away. On the other hand, instead of some women resisting this, the dominant ideal of femininity embraces compliance and tolerance of violent and hurtful behaviour, including infidelity (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010). Without taking this into consideration, any educational programme will be incomplete and, as the results have shown, will risk being inefficient.

3) A fifth of the male interviewees (21%) and 14% of the girls, saw the use of contraception by women as something that could be judged negatively since

she could be regarded as someone who has already had sexual experience with other men (16% vs. 11%) or is a “loose” or “easy” woman (5% vs. 3%). Such responses that reflected the fear of “what their partner may think of them” (Erika, 16 years old) or of “being caught with a contraceptive if they are not married” (Lourdes, 19 years old) were frequent among the adolescents. These answers are closely related to conceptions of femininity where a “decent and respectable” young woman is one who does not know about sexual matters and is a virgin before marriage. This findings show how femininity in sexuality- as in other areas- is fragile, a trait that needs to be worked on, won, and then defended, since teenagers can easily loose them when evaluated by the strict expectations in their society (Holland *et al.* 1998).

However, an encouraging finding is the fact that some young women are starting to put pressure on their sexual partners to use the condom. This information was found among the three main reasons- in a close question with options from which to choose from - why a man uses the condom (mentioned by 10% of the teenage boys). Therefore, although in small proportions, significant changes are starting take place.

Finally it is worth mentioning that, although Mexico is a catholic country and one in which the Catholic Church has a strong influence on its followers, religious beliefs were not predominant in the adolescents’ decisions when considering premarital sex, the use of contraception or their living arrangements before marriage. Very few answers explained the rejection of contraception because it is a “sin” (Karla, 14 years old). However, the teenage girls’ desire of “entering church as a virgin” was often found, as Jazmin (18 years old) stated: “Women have to be ‘clean’ when they reach marriage”. This answer shows that religious beliefs seem to be stronger when considering premarital sex than contraception. This might be due to the fact that the option of using contraception is not even considered, since intercourse is not planned. Likewise, as Amuchástegui (1998) also found in her study, although female virginity was often described as sacred among the male and female participants, the religious origins of these images were not present in the

women's accounts. I agree with Amuchástegui's interpretation when she argues that it is the voice of society and not of the priests that dictates the norms. Again, as Butler explains, performativity of heteronormativity is a repetition and a ritual that achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body and culturally accepted norms (Butler, 1997).

It is important to highlight that, although in Chapter VI it was possible to identify an emerging equity discourse around sex in most teenage participants and a voicing of less traditional attitudes towards sexual practices and enjoyment, 'traditional' discourses still appear to be moulding gender roles. This is to say that adolescents tend to end up supporting and reproducing, to a greater degree, the gender discourses imposed and transmitted by society and its institutions. Therefore the chance that sexuality is an area, within which 'alternative' discourses might have the possibility of gaining a foothold, is still in a conflicting process between what is expected and what participants feel should change. This could suggest that gender roles within intimate relationships and the space of the 'home' are being less likely to shift, as opposed to other areas such as work, where it is believed that the influence of modernization has put a greater pressure on traditional discourses. The changes in intimate relationships that offered possibilities for change are still those that do not endanger the status, dominance control and power of masculinity.

### **8.3.5. - Motherhood and Fatherhood**

Chapter VII<sup>17</sup> focuses on answering my fifth and last research question; "How are teenagers shaped by gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity that influence their views of parenthood and especially motherhood? As my findings show, more than half (54%) the young women from this study did not seem to consider their gender as having any other aspect besides its

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roles of producing offspring, becoming mothers and being someone's partner or wife. For Patricia (20 years old) to be a woman was to "give love to my partner [and] give him children". However it is important to understand, as Harris *et al.* (2005) also found, that many adolescent girls viewed motherhood as normal and respected and caring for their child rather than working, not a problem and even less a failure. Probably that is the reason why, mainly adolescent girls, seemed to show a greater resistance to change and appeared highly invested in very traditional gender discourses, including young women as future mothers without careers. It is important however to emphasize that this is a classed issue facing economically marginalized young women. As Guadalupe (17 years old) mentions: "I believe there is no career which is interesting for a woman to have if she is married, since she should stay at home with her children". Therefore, a young woman's chances are directly tied to her role as wife and mother and not to her autonomy as an individual with rights. This condition illustrates the highly unequal gendered discourses at play, since men's identities have not been defined to the same degree, through being a father.

Most of the participants still considered motherhood as a passage to womanhood and as something that most young women desire. Motherhood is viewed by many as a teenage girl's source of worth, respect, status and meaning in their lives. Adolescent girls are thought to gain greater maturity and become more responsible when entering a fertile phase, having intercourse and giving birth to a baby. Likewise, adolescent girls did not only value motherhood because they felt they will have someone to live for and someone who will always love them but because- through motherhood- they also reinforce and enhance their relationship with their man. In this research an overwhelming majority of female participants and all the teenage boys, expressed that *men give women more importance when they are pregnant*. Most of the interviewees voiced their belief that by becoming a mother, a young woman is treated better by her partner and by society, radically changing her access to, and control over, household resources.

The possibility of a woman being treated badly when having a baby was mainly conceived in the case of single mothers. The adolescents believed that under this circumstance, the young woman is less loved and respected by society (including her nuclear family), she is perceived as “loose” and people take advantage of and gossip more about her. Moreover, twice as many teenage girls than boys mentioned that men in general consider a childless woman, as less of a woman. On the other hand- again twice as many adolescent girls than boys- even regarded a woman without children as someone unable to find fulfilment in her life. However, there were few female participants with a partner who voiced that by having a child a young woman is treated badly. They referred to the young woman’s loss of her adolescent status and the lack of freedom to go out with her friends, as something due to her new responsibilities. These teenage girls seemed to be aware of the gender division of labour that comes with motherhood, that changes their life style by confining them to the home and to the care of their partner and child.

Finally, another relevant finding obtained from a close question in this research, was the strong value that the relationship with a man has for a woman, a value that sometimes can overcome motherhood. Only a fourth of the teenage girls (24%) believed it was more likely that a woman would leave her partner if he couldn’t have children and half of them (54%) considered that a woman would not leave her man, even when knowing before getting married, that he couldn’t have children. This is thought to be so because the relationship gives the teenage girl a sense of belonging, often essential in her life and it appears that, feeling loved and cared for by the man she loves, can compensate the need to have a child.

Parenthood is an important aspect to take into account not only among teenage girls, but also among young men. Although many male adolescents would have wanted to postpone the pregnancy, they recognized the important value of fatherhood within their relationship and in society. While only a few defined manhood specifically based on their ability to procreate, almost half of them

expressed that making a woman pregnant, did give them a stronger feeling of manhood. These results show how sexual prowess- especially for under-privileged men- is regarded as an empowering action and an important way of proving masculinity (Holland *et al.* 1998). As Marcelin (18 years old) expressed, it was important to him to have children “to demonstrate that I am a man. To gain respect in society”. Moreover this study shows that for many of the adolescent boys a child becomes an avenue to gain a status that they would not otherwise be able to acquire. Likewise, for more than half of the young men, to have a baby is an important way to gain their partners’ love and to reaffirm and seal the union.

However, when faced with an extreme situation, the relationship does not seem to be as important as their need to have children and reaffirm their masculinity in front of their family, peers and society in general. A third of the teenage boys did not believe that a child makes them have a stronger commitment to their partner; the majority of them (71%) would most probably leave the woman if she does not want to have children and almost half (49%) would not marry the young woman if they knew beforehand that she could not have children. Considering this, it was interesting to notice that for many male interviewees, fatherhood did not have a positive connotation in their lives. Half of the male participants thought that fatherhood is not a prime objective in life for men, and more than a third argued that women become pregnant to “trap” them. It is important to highlight that these findings could have been influenced by the fact that half of the interviewees (51%) did not want to have a child at this moment in their lives because; a) they believed that the baby would frustrate many of their plans as Ángel (15 years old) voiced: “I wanted to do many things that I cannot do anymore now. I did not want to work now. I wanted to enter the military school and be a pilot. This requires being single and without commitments”, b) the fear of not having a good and stable economic situation to offer to their partner and new-born baby as José (17 years old) expressed; “I haven’t finished school and to support a family now-a-days is really hard “*está canijo*”, c) their young age to father a child, as Juan (17 years old) explained; “It was not my intention to have a child at 17. Maybe at 20 or 21” and, d) their

unwillingness to deal with this responsibility at this moment in their lives as Abraham (18 years old) voiced; “I am not ready to face such a great responsibility”. Therefore, although almost half of the male interviewees (49%) did want a pregnancy in their lives, the other half did not.

#### **8.4. - Conclusion**

This study supports the idea that gendered dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity are inextricably linked to teenage pregnancy, since they strongly influence the adolescents’ views on the value of young women’ education and work, their identities, the areas of sexuality and contraception and parenthood- especially motherhood. This research considers the important influence of teenagers’ up-take of dominant views of gender, masculinity and femininity in the production of sexual attitudes, beliefs and practices that explain why information is not enough to prevent a pregnancy. Fortunately, adolescents from this study were starting to consider that the gender differences experienced were socially or historically determined and, so they did not always interpret and rationalize them as the natural and immutable biological order.

Although these differences between men and women appear to be questioned and are not yet definitively challenged, it is important to highlight that these young women and men appear to hold a gender ideology that crosses a transitional phase between the traditional and the modern views of young women’s gendered dominant discourses. They are at the same time, accommodating and resisting (Aggleton, 1987) or at once subject to sexual regulation, but at points rupturing (Renold and Ringrose, 2008) dominant forms of heterosexuality and seem to be open to experiencing “alternative identities and heterosexual practices” (Maxwell,2007:551)

## **CHAPTER IX. - CONCLUSION**

### **10.1. – Introduction**

This study arose from my interest in understanding teenage pregnancy from a cultural point of view. When I began this doctoral research project, I had the belief that cultural factors such as gender discourses and expectations influenced the self-perception of sexuality, the couple's relationship, the use or rejection of contraception and parenthood, especially motherhood. I reflected on the idea that, due to the strong influence that gendered dominant discourses have on teenagers' behaviours and expectations, "the value" of an unplanned pregnancy is "enhanced" by a view that pregnancy, especially among under-privileged groups, can re-affirm the future parents sexual and social identities and lead them to a higher social status and power within their relationship and in their social milieu.

This research seeks to draw upon theoretically rich research projects- that rest upon the common epistemological premise that truths or meanings are not independent, but are socially created, mutable and flexible as well as highly regulated -and to explore the understandings, ideas, discourses, values and models of sexuality within a sample of Mexican teenagers from working lower and middle class.

Likewise, there was an interest in collecting information supporting the idea that family planning methods are not used by adolescents as a result of a whole series of complex dynamics of gendered subjectivities -strongly influenced by persistent norms of feminine sexual respectability and masculine sexual performance.

In this Chapter I will explore a number of areas in which work could be developed to implement new programmes of sex education with this population, which could be more successful than the existing ones.

## **10.2. - Summary of my contribution to knowledge**

Considering specifically my findings, my contribution to knowledge centres on showing that gendered discourses and expectations are strongly influencing the adolescents' views on identity in the areas of education, work, sexuality and contraception, teenage pregnancy and parenthood. I believe my analysis demonstrates how the discrimination and the expectations surrounding sexuality and contraception that are placed- especially on young women- contribute to their vulnerability. Traditional views of femininity mean teenage girls continue to look for other options besides school and labour, to become recognizable beings in a patriarchal society. For Mexican adolescent girls, womanhood continues to be closely related to motherhood and their desire to please men and fulfil ideas about men's expectations of them. Many young women still often consider having a male partner essential to feel complete or fulfilled.

Information from this work also shows that young men hold on to gendered discourses that support a patriarchal family and social organization. Although they seem to be welcoming a more active participation of women in the different areas, they are still reluctant to accept this assertiveness when it might threaten the gender hierarchy or make them lose the control they are used to having. As a result of this conflict -between what is expected and what participants feel should change- male adolescents still seem to end up supporting, in a strong way, the social norms and dominant discourses imposed by their patriarchal society. As recent surveys data has shown, in Mexico close to a third of women still have to ask permission to go out by themselves (CONAPRED, 2012), 4 out of 10 women 15 years and older are abused physically and psychologically by their partner and 2 out of 10 have received complaints due to the way they spend the money, have been prohibited to work and study or their

partner has taken money or properties from them (ENDIREH, 2011). As my study and these recent data show, there is a need for better understandings of gender, sexism and dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity.

The important role the baby plays in affirming the young people's adult sexual and social identities, by giving them a higher social status and power in their social milieu, was also highlighted in this work, showing that the relationship between partners and parenthood become for many teenagers, adaptive situations. As the findings provided in this work show, when adolescents were asked if a man would marry a woman after knowing that she could not have any children, a significant percentage of participants (43% female and 49% of male) argued that he would not marry her. This information suggests that a pregnancy is an important requisite for many interviewees -both male and female- to maintain a committed relationship like marriage. Now a day this situation has not change much, at least in a Mexican/Latino middle-low income population. Motherhood is still seen by many young women as a key aspect to woman's fulfilment and many Latino men, continue to consider being macho as a relevant dimension towards a self-definition of manhood in which, an obvious link to fatherhood is present (Cervantes, 2009; Winocur, 2012; Molina Torterolo, 2014).

### **10.3. - Practical recommendations**

This research suggests that, if health and educational programmes for teenagers who are facing a pregnancy are to be successful, they should:

1) *Happen at an early age*. Two rationales were found in my findings, which support the need to start providing sexual education programmes at an early age. On one hand, the age at which my participants start their sexual lives is important. In this research two-thirds (66%) of the teenage girls stated they had sex for the first time between the ages of 12 and 16, the largest percentages being among adolescent girls aged between 15 and 16 (27% and 19% respectively). Teenage boys on the other hand, showed larger percentages

between the ages of 16 and 17 (23% and 28% respectively). In addition to this, the fear of jeopardizing or losing the relationship by doing anything that can disappoint or make their partners angry –such as suggesting contraception– was found among the youngest of the sample.

There are discourses of protection that argue against provision of sexual information, since it ‘corrupts innocent minds’ (Alldred and David, 2007) and promotes sexual activity among children as well as those that describe children as ‘too young’ to understand knowledge about sexuality and therefore “should be protected through the denial of access” (Robinson, 2008:121). However, as this research shows, the greater risk of a pregnancy is at sexual initiation and this initiation is happening every time at an earlier age. The problem is therefore, that ‘these innocent minds’ are already having sex but unprepared and unprotected. Hence to be effective, health and educational programmes need to define sexuality “as an integral part of a person’s identity, which is socially constructed and constantly reviewed and renegotiated by individuals, including children, as sexual agents throughout their lives” (Robinson, 2008:116).

There is a need to consider how “in the name of the protection of children (including the protection of childhood innocence) children’s vulnerability and exploitation is actually intensified” (Robinson, 2008:116). As Ringrose states, if sex education “invoke[s] fears over contaminating forms of sexuality infringing upon constructions of appropriate girlhood sexual innocence and purity” (Ringrose, 2012:50), the task of sex education will continue to be problematic. Perhaps the main issue is not fears over age-appropriate sexualisation of boys and girls, but the pressing reality that children who are younger than 12 are having sex and getting pregnant (girls) and require information in order to ensure they will be better informed for sexual activity and sexual encounters.

As I mentioned in my literature review, sexual education was introduced in the fifth and sixth grades in Mexico through an obligatory textbook for all students in 1998. The information includes material about human biology and life skills.

Therefore children aged 10 or 11 years old they start receiving information about their bodies but it isn't until they are 13 years old (the seventh grade) that the programmes start including strong life-skills development and a sexual education component. In addition to this, the debates over sexual education in schools rarely hear the adolescents' voices and understand their needs. They become shouting matches between those adults who promote abstinence only or use discourses of protection that argue against provision of sexual information -since it 'corrupts innocent minds' (Alldred and David, 2007).

2) *Provide teenagers with adequate possibilities to continue with their schooling.* As Alldred and David explain; "Teenage pregnancy may have been treated as having *implications* for education, but education policies have not been developed *for* pregnant and mothering teens" (2007:178). As opposed to what might be thought, the teenage participants from this study were mostly positive about education, since most of them admitted having "future" plans to study once the baby is older. Most of them considered reaching a high school diploma or a technical education. Although since 2004 the Secretariat of Public Education *in Mexico* (SEP) created a programme –*Promajoven*<sup>18</sup>- that grants scholarships to support basic education (up to middle high school) for young mothers or pregnant teenagers, the attempts have not been very successful in providing these teenagers with adequate possibilities to continue with their schooling. Up to 2013, 71 mil 461 loans have been provided and in 2014 the SEP announced the National Strategy for the prevention of national pregnancy. Concerning the Educational part, the Secretariat would continue offering loans so the teenagers could finish their studies and would include the creation of a networking to reduce the educational gap of young mothers, dropout prevention as well as the promotion of "responsible sex education". Hopefully this programme will, as Alldred and David (2007) state, acknowledge the practical difficulties that young mothers face when wanting to return to school or work as well as the structural factors that limit their success. The idea of equality in education and work opportunities is starting to gain ground, however, as this study showed, this is so in most cases only if by studying and/or working, the

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<sup>18</sup> Becas de Apoyo a la Educación Básica de Madres Jóvenes y Jóvenes Embarazadas.

young woman does not question the man's authority within the family, become more successful than him or neglect her duties at home as wife and as mother.

3) Public health agencies, school sex educational curriculum and health programmes in general, should consider- as this study has demonstrated- that family planning methods are not used by adolescents also as a result of a whole series of complex dynamics of gendered subjectivities, strongly influenced by persistent norms of feminine sexual respectability and masculine sexual performance. Therefore these programmes and agencies should work on making the information presented, relevant and meaningful to teenagers and provide a context in which adolescents are helped to cope with gendered power dynamics. As Measor et al. (2000) and Halstead and Reiss (2003) have argued, sex education programmes do not succeed because of their poor understanding of or their respectful involvement with the adolescents' culture and values (in Alldred and David, 2007).

Health and educational programmes need to create a setting in which young women and men do not feel judged or scrutinised. Likewise, as Ringrose (2012) states, sex education counselling and policy (in the UK) "is organised around principles of sexual risk and protection in highly gendered ways". As this author has identified, they construct "sexual activity as natural for boys and a risky burden for young women to delay as long as possible" (Ringrose, 2012:43). This view, as general data shows, is not working for many adolescents.

This research was planned considering the importance of understanding teenagers' needs, views, concerns, and aspirations and to comprehend the dilemmas they confront as thoroughly as possible. By understanding what teenagers believe to be true about their lives, we will be in a much better position to implement sexual and reproductive health programmes that are meaningful to them. Likewise, it is imperative to recognize individual circumstances and needs, which vary according to their gender, ethnicity and social background. The environment these teenagers grow up in, not only

gives meaning to what they do, but sets limits upon what it is possible for them to do and how it is possible to live.

Programmes should be able to accommodate the needs of especially vulnerable groups or of those who are difficult to reach- such as adolescent girls and boys, unmarried young women and single mothers, especially poor- and provide a context in which they feel safe to address the realities of the gender power dynamics (Kehily, 2002) and gender violence that underlie a sexual relationship. Sexual educational programmes should be able to closely examine dominant discourses- especially *Machismo*- which unfortunately are often assumed to be 'common sense' prescriptions for living (Davison and Frank, 2006). They should help to cope with gendered power dynamics by offering participants opportunities to voice -within a protected setting- the gender tensions that may be generated by empowerment and equal participation in sexual topics. It is important to realize that young women who are experiencing oppression or violence, need to be helped to find effective means that could help them cope with these dynamics in society through the negotiation of sexual and reproductive practices (Wood *et al.* 1998).

Health and educational programmes should also promote sex in a more egalitarian way and support teenagers to define ideas about their own sexual behaviour, to achieve a different sense of identity from dominant social and gender expectations. They need to challenge male control of sexual knowledge and give teenage girls access to sexual information without making them fear they will be stigmatized or considered "loose" or "easy women". This knowledge is important because it can also open new avenues to alternative constructions of love and sexual practices.

It is imperative that sex educational programmes provide culturally specific and relevant information that considers the class group, race and socio-economic level in Mexico, in order to be applicable to their way of thinking. For example, while the use of condoms can be viewed by many under-privileged young men as unmanly and as a barrier to affirming virility, for some middle-and upper

class Mexican adolescents, a condom reflects masculinity and gives men prestige in their social group (Aguilar and Botello in Chávez, 1999).

4) *Engage in discussions of desire and pleasure.* It is important for health and educational programmes not to limit the information to risk of pregnancies, venereal diseases or other health and reproductive dangers, but to also engage in discussions of desire and pleasure. As Fine and McClelland (2006) have suggested, there is a ‘missing discourse’ of female desire in sex education and therefore there is a need to provide strategies to enable girls to develop sexual pleasure as equal actors in sexual relationships (Ringrose, 2012). It is important to legitimate woman’s sexual pleasure, help value her performance without guilt or feeling of being a “loose woman”. To help her discover her “sexual subjectivity” (Tolman, 2007) by experiencing herself as a sexual being entitled to sexual pleasure and with the right to sexual safety and sexual choices. To help them broaden their sexual views to more than the relationship with the man and motherhood, to achieve a sense of feminine identity. This is to say, to help them find a sense of identity as autonomous sexual human beings, while at the same time, helping the young men not to feel his masculinity threatened.

5) *Promote teenage girls’ expression of entitlement to reproductive and sexual knowledge.* Programmes should promote teenage girls’ expression of entitlement to reproductive and sexual knowledge. The aim of sexual education programmes should not only be to provide information about family planning methods but to break the taboos, misconceptions and silence around sexuality. “When we omit to teach something, we let playground whispers become louder and uncontested” (King and Schneider, 1999 in Atkinson 2002). If prohibitions and constraints from society continue, it will be very difficult to develop programmes -which will highlight a more mature sexuality through cultural norms and discourses- to teach teenagers to negotiate safe sex with their partners. Likewise it will also be impossible to gain public legitimacy for healthier, more gender-equal alternatives.

The area of contraception is full of mixed views, beliefs and prejudice from both female and male adolescents. The information needs to be clarified, always taking into consideration the adolescents' fears and misconceptions, which are deeply influenced by cultural beliefs that also should be understood, if policy makers and reproductive health providers want birth control methods to be better accepted. In this study, there were teenagers with more traditional attitudes towards sex and family planning methods, who rejected a more active participation from women or were more prone to leave the responsibility of contraception in the hands of the man; "men are the ones who use contraceptives and take care of the woman". This situation reflects the strong influence that asymmetric relationships still exert over young women, where the male figure is the authority. This enhances the importance to help teenage girls increase their awareness and expression of entitlement to reproductive and sexual knowledge and self-determination.

6) *Work on young women's self-esteem, self-perception and confidence.* My findings suggest that young women are very concerned about how they appear to adolescent boys and about their attractiveness to them- such concern contributes to their vulnerability since it tends to define how they feel about their life choices (Ringrose, 2008). Therefore health and educational programmes should also aim at encouraging young men and women "to think openly and uncritically about whether and what types of parenting, partnership and friendship relationships they value and aspire to" (Alldred and David, 2007:183). For many teenage girls from this study, marriage and motherhood continue to be important pre-requisites to achieve adulthood, to forge a social identity as well as to gain a certain social position, respect and status. This is why it is crucial to improve the situation of young women by changing the way they perceive themselves and the way they are socially perceived by others.

Health and educational programmes should help young girls achieve a 'performance of confident sexual agency' by becoming sexually empowered knowledgeable individuals, in control and making positive and assertive choices

around their own sexuality (Gill, 2008). It is important to promote an expression of entitlement and self-determination, but always understanding the cultural factors that influence the self-perception of sexuality, the couple's interactions and the use or rejection of contraception among adolescents (Alldred and David, 2007).

7) *Involve teenage boys.* As mentioned previously, this research was undertaken at the Department of Adolescence in a government general hospital in Mexico City. One of the areas of the Department provides family planning services and gives information that addresses teenagers' reproductive and sexual health needs. During the research few adolescent boys participated in the educational programmes because either they had to work or they were just not interested. Therefore, mostly teenage girls were the ones who participated in the programme with the idea that, it was better that at least the woman would receive the information.

There is a need to reach the male population and include them in the sexual education programmes. By achieving their involvement, it will be possible to construct bridges to make communication about gender discourses and expectations easier among teenagers. There needs to be an understanding that it is critical to involve boys in the challenging of gender biased views and patriarchal constructs of masculinity. Likewise, it will give especially female adolescents, the opportunity to listen to what their partners think about the different gendered sexual discourses that strongly influence their relationship and their use of contraception, giving them tools to be more assertive and communicative.

#### **10.4. - Critical reflections**

As I mentioned in Chapter IV there were a number of limitations in the current study that should be considered, since they might have implications for future work in this field.

## 1) Reflections around ethics and bias

In terms of power relations, it is important to understand how my age as the interviewer, my level of education, hierarchical position and gender could have influenced the interviewees' honesty in their responses and even their willingness to participate in the study, impacting the quality of the information obtained. In addition to this, my empathy toward the views of the same gender interviewees, could have easily affected my perceptions and shaped the writing of my document.

The way the biases and difficulties that might have been introduced by a face-to-face situation as against self-completion, is also an aspect that requires attention especially with sensitive and of a personal nature topics, such as the ones studied in this research.

## 2) Quantitative vs. Qualitative aspect of the research.

This study, as we know, was strongly influenced by the fact that it initially belonged to a research planned for the needs and interests of a public hospital in Mexico City. This situation determined in a way, the kind of instrument used for my study. Although I developed extra open and semi-structured open questions as well as a complete gender section to strengthen the role that dominant gendered discourses play in the lives of my teenagers, it is important to highlight that these additions were always confined to the structure of the already planned instrument.

If I had the opportunity to do it again today I would do it differently:

a) *I would consider a more qualitative type of research.* I would give the adolescents a greater opportunity to express their views and feelings in a freer way. This would allow me to explore in greater depth some of the issues included in this work. For example, instead of just asking: "Are you studying?" or "What is your actual level of schooling?", I would have given the adolescents

the opportunity to talk more about their experiences during their school years. I would have spent additional time trying to understand their reasons for desertion and for not going back to school. Likewise, I would have focused on their family situation and reactions to their sons or daughters' significant life decisions and, the different influences and circumstances that guided them through their present path.

b) *I would rewrite some of my questions.* I would work on the ambiguity of some of my questions. For example, when I asked “*Is a woman who is studying more attractive to men than one who is not?*” The adjective “*attractive*” was viewed as physical attraction, while I was more interested in considering the preference to have a partner who was better educated academically speaking.

I would try to reduce even more the existing bias in some of my questions. In this research I gathered information, dealing with discourses of gender and sexuality. However, I believe there was a certain bias in the way I elaborated some of these questions- in spite of my efforts to carefully prevent this from happening- since they were influenced by my own beliefs about the position and discrimination of young women in a patriarchal society. For example, there were questions for which I provided different options of responses or asked the participants to rank the responses, which indirectly shaped the answers. Questions such as:

*What would your partner's family think if you decided not to have any children?*

- They would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_\_
- They would get angry \_\_\_\_\_
- They would be disappointed \_\_\_\_\_
- They would not care \_\_\_\_\_
- They would stop talking to you \_\_\_\_\_

*Why is it important that a woman has children? (Rank the answers):*

- It is the way to fulfil herself in life \_\_\_\_\_
- To be socially accepted \_\_\_\_\_
- To satisfy her maternal instinct \_\_\_\_\_
- To have someone to live for \_\_\_\_\_

To have someone who will always love her \_\_\_\_\_  
It is not important \_\_\_\_\_

Likewise I realized that the use of options such as “I don’t know”, “The same” or “Both” such as in: “*Do you think that men experience any change in their sexual desire when women use a contraceptive?* Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ I do not know \_\_\_”, allowed being more evasive than giving true choices to the participants. Therefore, I believe that in order to obtain more accurate responses, the interviewer should be careful when using options such as these ones.

c) *Important additions.* I believe there was a need to research more about young women’s sexuality with questions focusing on; sexual desire, sexual pleasure as well as young women’s feelings when they had sex for the first time, their fears and thoughts when they lost their virginity during premarital sex, the way they experienced their first sexual encounter and the way they faced this situation with their parents, partners and friends.

### 3) About the sample.

The sample used in this research was a “non-probability sample” with participants selected for “convenience” (Cohen and Manion, 1994:88). Perhaps, many teenagers felt pressure to participate in this research for fear of some kind of reprisal from the hospital. It would have been interesting to find a comparative sample outside the hospital’s walls, which could have included young people from the same socio-economic level, but from other areas of Mexico. Likewise, it would have been interesting to find a sample of adolescents that did not belong to a hospital or an institution, in order to achieve “real voluntary participation” and eliminate the possible “threat” that, in the case of this study, the position of the interviewer as the psychologist of the Department could have created.

When talking about my position as a researcher, it is important to considerate the power imbalance involved in the different positionalities of the interviewees and myself. As Marshall and Young state; “The hierarchies that are created

from these differences can have powerful impacts on the research process, the data, the findings, and the people involved” (2006:71). These hierarchies could have influenced the teenagers’ responses and are acknowledged as shaping the research process.

Moreover, it would have been important to have a comparative sample that included adolescents from different socio-economic levels, in order to identify different views and the way the gendered dominant discourses can influence the adolescents, depending on their background. Finally, I believe that my research should have included a greater number of young men and couples.

#### 4) The gathering and analysis of the information.

By being the person responsible for administering the instrument and registering the answers, I had the opportunity to make some amendments by adjusting- when necessary- the interview to the participants’ views and discourses. However, it is important to highlight that the biases and difficulties that might have been introduced by a face-to-face situation, as against self-completion, could have affected the spontaneity and truthfulness of the information collected. Furthermore, considering that I was a woman of European origin, with a direct involvement with the hospital and from a racial, cultural and economically different background than the participants, undertaking a research with topics of such a sensitive nature and a member of a patriarchal society strongly influenced by dominant discourses of *Machismo*- the risk of not being fully objective nor of obtaining genuine answers from the interviewees, was high. Therefore it would have been helpful to have another interviewer, preferably male and of Mexican origin, who could have helped me reduce these possible biases and difficulties.

Finally, the answers were recorded by hand literally to avoid, as Cohen *et al.* (2000) mention, summarizing responses in the course of the interview. This, I believed sometimes broke the continuity of the interview and, most importantly, may have again resulted in bias, since I may have unconsciously emphasized

responses that agreed with my expectations and failed to note those that did not. In order to have avoided this or reduce the possibility of bias I should have, on one hand, recorded the interviews and then transcribe them, and on the other hand, I should not have been the only person analysing the information. It would have been important to either have the information go back to those who provided it in order to assess its representativeness or, to have someone else also evaluate the information.

### **10.5. - Further Research needed in Mexico**

All these considerations suggest the need for further research since very few studies can be found, considering the Mexican population and the influence of gendered dominant discourses:

a) Research with young girls and boys. This in order to understand the way children are being influenced by dominant discourses since their early years, discourses which tend, later in their lives, to have an impact on their behaviours and life expectations.

b) Research on the contemporary state of masculinity (Machismo /Caballerismo) and femininity among adolescents from different classes, races and socio-economic levels.

c) Research on sexuality among adolescents from different classes, races and socio-economic levels. This is so since a significant amount of data, refer mainly to an under-privileged population.ç

d) Research with longitudinal studies, focusing on the Mexican family's organization, values, life expectations and cohesiveness, to identify the degree in which patterns are produced and reproduced through generations as well as the degree of resistance that still promotes "traditional normative prescriptions" (Harris *et al.* 2000:386) to dominate.

e) Last but not least, there is a need for more specific research focusing on young women's sexual desire and sexual pleasure. Studies on these topics could help identify the extent to which teenage girls are engaging in dominant discourses and the way they are negotiating, to define their ideas about their sexuality to achieve a different sense of identity.

## **10.6. - Conclusion**

As the findings of this research show, although a significant percentage of both female and male adolescents seem to recognize other aspects of their individual lives besides their reproductive capacity, the gendered expectations that shape different views of young women and men attitudes towards sexual practices and contraception -and which are highly influential in the rate of teenage pregnancies- have yet to be definitively challenged. In addition to this,

I believe that one of the reasons why so many years of health and educational programmes in Mexico have not rendered any significant results in lowering pregnancy (Lovera, 2015, Peña Nieto, 2015) is because they do not include, with any depth, the cultural aspects and gendered dominant discourses that teenagers face. Therefore this work forms a certain baseline of knowledge about these gendered cultural explanations surrounding teen-aged pregnancy, that other people can then work from. It explains why there is a need for better understandings of gender and dominant discourses of masculinity and femininity, as well as, discourses of gendered power and control, if policies and educational and health programmes regarding teenage pregnancy, are to be effective. Considering these aspects and discourses, will have important implications for understanding how teenagers negotiate gendered discourses surrounding pregnancy and related issues of sexuality, relationships, motherhood and fatherhood in Mexico.

Likewise, there is a great need to help adolescents, especially under-privileged young women, to find alternative ways- besides parenthood- to reaffirm their

sexual, social and personal identities to reach a higher social status and power within their relationship and in their social milieu, before they engage in sexual relationships, as opposed to during the process of dealing with an unplanned pregnancy, as with the participants of this research.

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## APPENDIX I.- STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

### WOMEN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF THE INTERVIEW \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_  
NUMBER OF ORIENTATION SESSIONS: \_\_\_\_\_  
GESTATIONAL STAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1.- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.- Age : \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.- Marital Status: Single\_\_\_ Married\_\_\_ Free Union \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_  
Separated\_\_\_ Widow\_\_\_
- 4.- Do you presently live with your partner? Yes\_\_\_No\_\_\_
- 5.- Who do you live with?  
By yourselves \_\_\_ With his parents and his siblings \_\_\_  
With his mother and his siblings\_\_\_ With his father and his siblings \_\_\_  
With my parents \_\_\_ With my mother and my siblings \_\_\_  
With my father and my siblings \_\_\_ With his extended family \_\_\_  
With my extended family \_\_\_\_\_
- (If they are not living together)
- 6.- Do you know who your partner is living with?  
Both parents \_\_\_ Mother and siblings \_\_\_ Father and siblings \_\_\_  
Other family members \_\_\_ Alone \_\_\_ Friends \_\_\_ I Don't know \_\_\_  
(If they are living together)
- 7.- Who are you living with?  
Both parents \_\_\_ Mother and siblings \_\_\_ Father and siblings \_\_\_  
Other family members \_\_\_ Alone \_\_\_ Friends \_\_\_

### SCHOOLING

#### WOMAN'S SCHOOLING

- 8.- Are you presently studying? Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_  
(If she is)
- 9.- What are you studying? \_\_\_\_\_

10.- What is your actual schooling?

Elementary: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_

Middle School: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_

High School: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_

Technical Education/Commerce: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_

Trade School: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_

College: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_

(In case of having quit school)

11.- Why did you stop studying? Financial reasons \_\_\_ Lack of interest \_\_\_

Family reasons \_\_\_ Union \_\_\_ Pregnancy \_\_\_ Others reasons \_\_\_\_\_

12.- Were you in school when you found out you were pregnant?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

13.- While you were studying did you leave school for some time?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

14.- Why? Financial reasons \_\_\_ Lack of interest \_\_\_ Family reasons \_\_\_

Union \_\_\_ Pregnancy \_\_\_ Others reasons \_\_\_\_\_

15.- Do you plan/did you plan to keep on studying after your child is/was born?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

16.- When? \_\_\_\_\_

17.- How long were you out of school? Years \_\_\_ months \_\_\_

18.- What complete academic degree you have liked to finish?

Elementary School \_\_\_ Middle School \_\_\_ High School \_\_\_

Technical/Commerce \_\_\_ Trade School \_\_\_ College \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

19.- Which academic degree do you believe you would have been able to reach?

Elementary School \_\_\_ Middle School \_\_\_ High School \_\_\_

Technical/Commerce \_\_\_ Trade School \_\_\_ College \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **PARTNER'S SCHOOLING**

20.- Is your partner presently studying? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

21.- Was he studying when he learned you were pregnant? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

22.- What grade was he in: Elementary School \_\_\_ Middle School \_\_\_

High School \_\_\_ Technical/Commerce \_\_\_ Trade School \_\_\_ College \_\_\_

Other reasons \_\_\_\_\_

23.- Why did he stop studying? Financial reasons \_\_\_\_ Lack of interest \_\_\_\_  
Family reasons \_\_\_\_ Union \_\_\_\_ Pregnancy \_\_\_\_  
Others reasons \_\_\_\_\_

24.- Does he plan to keep on studying? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

25.- What does he plan to study? \_\_\_\_\_

## **WORK HISTORY**

### **WOMAN'S**

26.- Did you ever worked outside your home? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

27.- Are you presently working? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

28.- What are you working at? Domestic services \_\_\_\_ Other services \_\_\_\_  
Informal commerce \_\_\_\_ Formal commerce \_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_

29.- How long have you been working in your present job?  
Less than \_\_\_\_ Between 4 \_\_\_\_ Between 6 \_\_\_\_ More than 12 months \_\_\_\_  
4 months & 6 months & 12 months

30.- Do you receive any salary for your work? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

31.- How much? Less than \$100 \_\_\_\_ Between \$101-250 \_\_\_\_  
Between \$251-351 \_\_\_\_ Between \$351-500 \_\_\_\_ More than \$ 500 \_\_\_\_

32.- You get this salary: weekly \_\_\_\_ fortnightly \_\_\_\_ monthly \_\_\_\_

33.- What other jobs have you held? \_\_\_\_\_

### **PARTNER'S WORK**

34.- Is your partner presently studying or working? Studying \_\_\_\_ Working \_\_\_\_  
Neither one \_\_\_\_

35.- What is he working at? Domestic services \_\_\_\_ Other services \_\_\_\_  
Informal commerce \_\_\_\_ Formal commerce \_\_\_\_

36.- How long has he been working at his present job?  
Less than 4 months \_\_\_\_ Between 4 & 6 months \_\_\_\_ Between 6 & 12 \_\_\_\_  
Between 1 & 1.5 years \_\_\_\_ Between 1.5 & 2 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 2 & 2.5 years \_\_\_\_ Between 2.5 & 3 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 3 & 3.5 years \_\_\_\_ Between 3.5 & 4 years \_\_\_\_ More than 4 years \_\_\_\_

37.- Is it his first job? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

38.- What other jobs has he held? \_\_\_\_\_

39.- Do you know how much he earns? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

40.- How much? Less than \$100 \_\_\_ Between \$ 101- \$ 250 \_\_\_  
Between \$ 251- \$ 351 \_\_\_

41.- He earns that: Weekly? \_\_\_ Biweekly? \_\_\_ Monthly? \_\_\_

42.- Does he give you money for expenses? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

43.- How much does he give you for expenses? Less than \$ 100 \_\_\_  
Between \$101-250 \_\_\_ Between \$ 251-351 \_\_\_

44.- He gives you this amount: Weekly \_\_\_ Fortnightly \_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_

## **REPRODUCTIVE HISTORY AND PROFILE**

45.- How old were you when you had intercourse for the first time? \_\_\_\_\_

46.- How old were you when you first became pregnant? \_\_\_\_\_

47.- How many times have you been pregnant? \_\_\_\_\_

48.- How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

49.- Have you ever had an abortion Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

50.- Has any of your children died? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

51.- Before you got pregnant, did you have your actual partner? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

(if 51 is "No")

52.- With how many other partners have you had sex before, including the present one? \_\_\_\_\_

53.- With how many of these partners did you live? \_\_\_\_\_

54.- With how many did you get pregnant? \_\_\_\_\_

55.- What was your boyfriend's/husband's age when you got pregnant (actual pregnancy)? \_\_\_\_\_

56.- And yours (actual pregnancy)? \_\_\_\_\_

57.- How did your partner tell you that he wanted a child?  
I want you to give me a child \_\_\_\_ I want us to have a child \_\_\_\_  
I want you to have a child \_\_\_\_ You did not tell her anything \_\_\_\_  
He told you he wanted a child \_\_\_\_

58.- How did you feel when you realized for the first time you were pregnant?  
(Rank the answers)  
Surprised \_\_\_\_ Confused \_\_\_\_ Happy \_\_\_\_ Depressed \_\_\_\_ Fearful \_\_\_\_ Angry \_\_\_\_  
Anguished \_\_\_\_ Nothing \_\_\_\_

59.- How did you find out about the pregnancy? Lab test \_\_\_\_ Private clinic \_\_\_\_  
Through symptoms without examination \_\_\_\_ Health Centre \_\_\_\_  
Hospital \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

60.- What was the first thought that came to your mind when you learned that  
your partner was pregnant?  
To continue with the pregnancy \_\_\_\_ To interrupt the pregnancy \_\_\_\_

61.- How did you think that your partner would react? (Rank the answers)  
Surprised \_\_\_\_ Confused \_\_\_\_ Happy \_\_\_\_ Depressed \_\_\_\_  
Fearful \_\_\_\_ Angry \_\_\_\_ Anguished \_\_\_\_ Nothing \_\_\_\_

62.- How did he react? (Rank the answers)  
Surprised \_\_\_\_ Confused \_\_\_\_ Happy \_\_\_\_ Depressed \_\_\_\_ Fearful \_\_\_\_  
Angry \_\_\_\_ Anguished \_\_\_\_ Nothing \_\_\_\_

63.- If you could have, would you have preferred to interrupt the pregnancy?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

64.- If you could have, would you have preferred to postpone your pregnancy?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

65.- .- Did your partner want the baby or did she suggest an abortion?  
She wanted to continue the pregnancy \_\_\_\_  
She suggested to interrupt the pregnancy \_\_\_\_

66.- How did your family (parents, siblings, uncles) react to your pregnancy?  
Support \_\_\_\_ Rejection \_\_\_\_

67.- How? \_\_\_\_\_

68.- How did your partner's family (parents, siblings, uncles) react to your  
pregnancy? Support \_\_\_\_ Rejection \_\_\_\_

69.- How? \_\_\_\_\_

70.- If you were well in every sense (financially, in your relationship with your  
partner, etc.), how many children would you like to have? \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTRACEPTION USE AND KNOWLEDGE

71.- In your first sexual encounter, did you use any contraceptives?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

72.- In your first sexual encounter with your present partner, did you use contraceptives? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

73.- Have you talked as a couple, about how to prevent a pregnancy?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

74.- How were you taking care to prevent a pregnancy?

Withdrawal \_\_\_ Pills \_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_  
Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_ We do not use contraception \_\_\_

75.- Do you know or have heard about the birth control methods?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

76.- Which ones do you know? Pill \_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_

Foam \_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_

Tube Ligation \_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_

77.- Do you know or have you heard of: Pill \_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_

Injection \_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_

Tube Ligation \_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_

78.- Do you know how they are used?

Pill \_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_

IUD \_\_\_ Tube ligation \_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_

Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_

79.- Which contraceptive do you prefer?

Pill \_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_

IUD \_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_ Tube Ligation \_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_

Norplant \_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_

80.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

81.- Which contraceptive method do you think your partner would prefer?

Pill \_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_

IUD \_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_ Tube Ligation \_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_

Norplant \_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_

82. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

83.- Do you think men like their partners to use contraceptives? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

84.- Why do you think some women don't use contraceptives? \_\_\_\_\_

85.- Do you think contraceptives can cause any harm? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

86.-What sort of harm? \_\_\_\_\_

87.- Do you think you enjoy sex more: When you use contraception \_\_\_\_\_  
Without using contraception \_\_\_ It is the same \_\_\_\_\_

88.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

89.- Do you believe birth control methods affect sexual desire?: They diminish it  
\_\_\_ They increase it \_\_\_ There is no effect \_\_\_

90.-Do you think that men's sexual desire is affected when women use  
contraceptives? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_

91.- How? \_\_\_\_\_

### **SEXUAL AFFECTIVE LIFE**

92.- Are you presently involved with a partner? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

93.- How long have you been dating/did you date? \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

94.- How old is your partner? \_\_\_\_\_ years old

95.- When he learned that you were pregnant: he left you? \_\_\_  
went on with you? \_\_\_ he never found out? \_\_\_

96.- How long did he go on with you? The first 2 months of pregnancy \_\_\_\_  
Until the analysis came \_\_\_\_ Until the 4th-5th month of pregnancy \_\_\_\_  
Until the child was born \_\_\_\_ We are still together \_\_\_\_

97.- Since when have you been with your present partner?  
Less than 4 months \_\_\_ Between 4-6 months \_\_\_ Between 6-12 months \_\_\_  
Between 1-1.5 years \_\_\_ Between 1.5-2 years \_\_\_ Between 2-2.5 years \_\_\_  
Between 2.5-3 years \_\_\_ Between 3-3.5 years \_\_\_ Between 3.5- 4 years \_\_\_  
More than 4 years \_\_\_

98.- When did you start living together?  
0 to 3 months before the pregnancy \_\_\_  
3 to 6 months before the pregnancy \_\_\_  
1 year or more before the pregnancy \_\_\_  
When the diagnose was given \_\_\_  
From the \_\_\_\_ month of the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_

99.- Did your partner have sex with other women before meeting with you?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

100.- How many? \_\_\_\_\_

101.- Did he have children before meeting with you? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

## **GENDER**

102.- What do you (or did you) want your first baby to be? Girl \_\_\_ Boy \_\_\_

103.-Why? \_\_\_\_\_

104.- What does/did your partner want his first baby to be?: Girl? \_\_\_ Boy? \_\_\_

105.-Why \_\_\_\_\_

106.- If you could only have same sex children, what would you prefer?  
Boys \_\_\_ Girls \_\_\_

107.-Why? \_\_\_\_\_

108.- Do you consider "natural" for a man to have sex before marriage?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

109.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

110.- Do you consider "natural" for a woman to have sex before marriage?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

111.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

112.- Do you consider that intercourse should only happen when there is love  
involved? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

113.- Do you think that intercourse can happen just to derive pleasure?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

114.- Do you think that a woman comes to an age when she does not care for  
sex anymore? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

115.- At what age? 15-20 years \_\_\_ 21-25 years \_\_\_ 26-36 years \_\_\_  
37-45 years \_\_\_ more than 45 years \_\_\_\_\_

116.- Do you know what menopause is? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

117.- Do you believe that menopause ends with the sexual desire?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_

118.- Do you think that man's sexual desire disappears at a certain age?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

119.- At what age? 15-20 years \_\_\_ 21-25 years \_\_\_ 26-36 years \_\_\_  
37-45 years\_\_\_ 46-50 years \_\_\_ more than 50 years\_\_\_

120.- Do you believe that a woman who is studying is more attractive to men than one who is not? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

121.- What career or profession do you consider interesting for a woman to have? \_\_\_\_\_

122.- Do you think that certain studies or careers don't go well with maternity? Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_

123.-Which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

124.- Do you think men should be better educated than women? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

125.- Your partner feels more attracted to a woman who is studying? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

126.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

127.- Do you think men should be better educated than woman? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

128.- Why? Because he is the man \_\_\_  
Because he has to support the family \_\_\_  
Otherwise there will be problems in the relationship \_\_\_  
Otherwise he will feel insecure \_\_\_  
Because women have to take care of the house & children \_\_\_  
Otherwise he will not marry \_\_\_

129.- Do you believe that the fact that a woman is more educated than the man would create any problems in their relationship? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

130.- What kind of problems? \_\_\_\_\_

131.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

132.- What career or profession do you believe or know that your partner thinks is more interesting for a woman? \_\_\_\_\_

133.- Do you believe he thinks that certain studies or careers don't go well with women? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

134.- Do you believe he thinks that a woman should stay home with the kids? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

135.- Does your partner believe a man should be more educated than a woman? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

136.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

137.- Does a teenager become a woman when she has a baby?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

138.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

139.- Do you think that men believe that a sterile woman is less of a woman?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

140.- What do you believe? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

141.- A woman is treated differently when she becomes a mother?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

142.- How is she treated differently? \_\_\_\_\_

143.- Do you think women become more important to men when they are pregnant? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

144.- Do you believe women are more important when they are pregnant?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

145.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

146.- An unmarried woman with children is better seen than a married one who does not want children? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

147.- By becoming a mother, a woman's importance increases? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

148.- From which point of view? Legally \_\_\_ Socially \_\_\_ Family wise \_\_\_  
Because she has more rights \_\_\_

149.- Do you think that if a man knew beforehand that his partner could not have children, would he nevertheless marry her? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

150.- Do you think that a woman would leave her partner if she knew, before getting married, that he cannot have children? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

151.- What do you think is more probable:

a) that a man leaves his partner if she does not want to have children \_\_\_

b) that a woman leaves her partner if he does not want to have children \_\_\_

152.- Why is it important that a woman has children? (Rank the answers)

It is the way to fulfil herself in life \_\_\_\_\_

To be socially accepted \_\_\_\_\_

To satisfy her maternal instinct \_\_\_\_\_

To have someone to live for \_\_\_\_\_

To have someone who will always love her \_\_\_\_\_

It is not important \_\_\_\_\_

153.- Is a woman who has no children, capable of finding fulfilment in life?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

154.- A woman who does not want any children is worth:

More \_\_\_ Less \_\_\_ The same \_\_\_

155.- What would your partner think if you decided not to have any children?

He would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_\_

He would get angry \_\_\_\_\_ He would be disappointed \_\_\_\_\_

He would not care \_\_\_\_\_ He would leave you \_\_\_\_\_

156- What would your family think if you decided not to have any children?

They would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_\_

They would get angry at you \_\_\_\_\_ They would be disappointed \_\_\_\_\_

They would not care \_\_\_\_\_ They would stop talking to you \_\_\_\_\_

157.- What would your partner's family think if you decided not to have any children?

They would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_\_

They would get angry at you \_\_\_\_\_ They would be disappointed \_\_\_\_\_

They would not care \_\_\_\_\_ They would stop talking to you \_\_\_\_\_

158.- Why do you think some people do not use contraceptives?

Fear of something happening to them \_\_\_\_\_

Fear of making their partner angry \_\_\_\_\_ Ignorance \_\_\_\_\_

Religious values \_\_\_\_\_ It is socially not well seen \_\_\_\_\_

It is too much trouble \_\_\_\_\_ To catch a partner \_\_\_\_\_

Not knowing where to get the information \_\_\_\_\_

Their desire overtakes them \_\_\_\_\_

159.- What do you think men do when it is the woman who wants to use contraceptives?

They support her \_\_\_\_\_ They get angry \_\_\_\_\_ They are disappointed \_\_\_\_\_

They show indifference \_\_\_\_\_ They threaten to leave her \_\_\_\_\_

They are pleased \_\_\_\_\_

160.- What do they think? She is an easy woman \_\_\_\_\_

She is a responsible woman \_\_\_\_\_

She is a woman who has had sexual experience with other men \_\_\_\_\_

She is a woman who takes care of her health \_\_\_\_\_

She is an intelligent woman \_\_\_\_\_

161.- Caring for birth control is responsibility of: The man \_\_\_ The woman \_\_\_  
Both? \_\_\_ Who ever thinks about it? \_\_\_

162.- Do you believe that a woman who has sex for pleasure, and not to have children, is a bad woman? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

163.- Do you believe that for most men, a woman who has sex for pleasure and not for childbearing, is a "loose" woman? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

164.- To who is having sex more important? To men \_\_\_ To women \_\_\_  
To both \_\_\_

165.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

166.- Who is usually less interested in having sex? Men \_\_\_ Women \_\_\_  
Both \_\_\_ Both have the same interest \_\_\_

167.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

168.- Who should take the initiative to have sex? Men \_\_\_ Women \_\_\_  
Both \_\_\_

169.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

170.- Is it important that men have more sexual experience than women when they reach marriage? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

171.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

172.- Is it better that women have more sexual experience than men?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_

173.- How would you define a "responsible woman"?

\_\_\_\_\_

174.- How do you think a man would define a "responsible woman"?

\_\_\_\_\_

175.- How would you define a "responsible man"?

\_\_\_\_\_

176.- What does it mean to you to be a woman?

\_\_\_\_\_

## MEN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF THE INTERVIEW \_\_\_\_\_  
NUMBER OF ORIENTATION SESSIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

### GENERAL INFORMATION

1.- Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2.- Age : \_\_\_\_\_

3.- Marital Status: Single \_\_\_ Married \_\_\_ Free Union \_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_  
Separated \_\_\_ Widow \_\_\_

4.- Do you live presently with your partner? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

5.- Who do you live with?

By yourselves \_\_\_ With her parents and her siblings \_\_\_  
With her mother and her siblings \_\_\_ With her father and her siblings \_\_\_  
With my parents and my siblings \_\_\_ With my father and my siblings \_\_\_  
With my mother and my siblings \_\_\_ With her extended family \_\_\_  
With my extended family \_\_\_

(If they are not living together)

6.- Do you know who your partner is living with? Both parents \_\_\_  
Mother, siblings and others \_\_\_ Father, siblings and others \_\_\_  
Alone \_\_\_ Other family \_\_\_ Friends \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_

7.- Who are you living with? Both \_\_\_ Mother, siblings and others \_\_\_  
Father, siblings and others \_\_\_ Alone \_\_\_ Other family \_\_\_ Friends \_\_\_

### SCHOOLING

8.- Are you presently studying? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

(If he is)

9.- What are you studying \_\_\_\_\_

10.- What is your actual schooling?

Elementary: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_  
Middle School: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_  
High School: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_  
Technical Education/Commerce: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_  
Trade School: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_  
College: Complete \_\_\_ Incomplete \_\_\_  
(In case of having quit school)

11.- Why did you stop studying? Financial reasons \_\_\_ Lack of interest \_\_\_  
Family reasons \_\_\_ Union \_\_\_ Pregnancy \_\_\_ Others \_\_\_

12.- Do you plan to go on studying? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

13.-When? \_\_\_\_\_

14.- What do you plan to study? \_\_\_\_\_

## **WORK HISTORY**

### MAN'S WORK

15.- Are you presently working Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

16.- What are you working at? Domestic services \_\_\_ Other services \_\_\_  
Informal commerce \_\_\_ Formal commerce \_\_\_  
Others \_\_\_\_\_

17.- How long have you been working in your present job?  
Less than 4 months \_\_\_ Between 4 & 6 months \_\_\_  
Between 6 & 12 months \_\_\_ More than 12 months \_\_\_

18.- Do you receive any salary for your work? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

19.- How much?  
Less than \$ 1000 \_\_\_ Between \$ 101-250 \_\_\_ Between \$ 251-351 \_\_\_  
Between \$351-500 \_\_\_ More than \$ 500 \_\_\_

20.- You get this salary: weekly \_\_\_ fortnightly \_\_\_ monthly \_\_\_

21.- What motivated you to work? Lack of interest in school \_\_\_ Family's  
financial need \_\_\_ The union \_\_\_ The pregnancy \_\_\_ Parental demand \_\_\_

22.- What other jobs have you held? \_\_\_\_\_

23.- How much did you last in your other jobs?

First job? : Less than 4 months \_\_\_ Between 4 & 6 months \_\_\_  
Between 6-12 months \_\_\_ Between 1-1.5 years \_\_\_  
Between 1.5-2 years \_\_\_ Between 2-2.5 years \_\_\_  
Between 2.5-3 years \_\_\_ Between 3-3.5 years \_\_\_  
More than 3.5 years \_\_\_

Second job? : Less than 4 months \_\_\_ Between 4-6 months \_\_\_  
Between 6-12 months \_\_\_ Between 1-1.5 years \_\_\_  
Between 1.5-2 years \_\_\_ Between 2-2.5 years \_\_\_  
Between 2.5-3 years \_\_\_ Between 3-3.5 years \_\_\_ More than 3.5 years \_\_\_

Third job: Less than 4 months \_\_\_\_ Between 4-6 months \_\_\_\_  
Between 6-12 months \_\_\_\_ Between 1-1.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 1.5-2 years \_\_\_\_ Between 2-2.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 2.5-3 years \_\_\_\_ Between 3-3.5 years \_\_\_\_  
More than 3.5 years \_\_\_\_

24.- Do you give your partner money for expenses? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

25.- How much do you weekly give your partner for expenses?  
Less than \$ 100 \_\_\_\_ Between \$ 101-250 \_\_\_\_ Between \$ 251-351 \_\_\_\_  
Between \$351-500 \_\_\_\_ More than \$ 500 \_\_\_\_

26.- You give her this amount: Weekly? \_\_\_ Fortnightly? \_\_\_ Monthly? \_\_\_

### PARTNER' S WORK

27.- Does your partner work? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

28.- What is she working at? Domestic services \_\_\_\_ Other services \_\_\_\_  
Informal commerce \_\_\_\_ Formal commerce \_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_

29.- How long has she been working at her present job?  
Less than 4 months \_\_\_\_ Between 4-6 months \_\_\_\_  
Between 6-12 months \_\_\_\_ Between 1-1.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 1.5-2 years \_\_\_\_ Between 2-2.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 2.5-3 years \_\_\_\_ Between 3-3.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 3.5-4 years \_\_\_\_ More than 4 years \_\_\_\_

30.- Is this her first job? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

31.- What other jobs has she held?

### **REPRODUCTIVE HISTORY AND PROFILE**

32.- Is this the first partner you ever had sex with? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

33.- With how many other partners have you had sex before, including the present one? \_\_\_\_\_

34.- With how many of these partners did you live? \_\_\_\_\_

35.- How many became pregnant by you? \_\_\_\_\_ (specify with which partner) \_\_\_\_\_

36.- How old were you when you first had intercourse? \_\_\_\_\_

37.- How old were you when you first made a woman pregnant? \_\_\_\_\_

- 38.- How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
- 39.- How old was your partner/spouse when she became pregnant (present pregnancy)? \_\_\_\_\_ years old
- 40.- How old were you? \_\_\_\_\_ years old
- 41.- Has any of your partners had an abortion? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 42.- Has any of your children died? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 43.- How did you find out about the pregnancy? Lab test \_\_\_\_\_  
Private clinic \_\_\_\_\_ Through symptoms without examination \_\_\_\_\_  
Health Centre \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 44.- How did you feel when you learned that your partner was pregnant? (Rank the answers) Surprised \_\_\_\_\_ Confused \_\_\_\_\_ Happy \_\_\_\_\_  
Depressed \_\_\_\_\_ Fearful \_\_\_\_\_ Angry \_\_\_\_\_ Anguished \_\_\_\_\_ Nothing \_\_\_\_\_
- 45.- What was the first thought that came to your mind when you learned that your partner was pregnant?: To continue with the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_  
To interrupt the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_
- 46.- How did you think that your partner would react? (Rank the answers):  
Surprised \_\_\_\_\_ Confused \_\_\_\_\_ Happy \_\_\_\_\_ Depressed \_\_\_\_\_  
Fearful \_\_\_\_\_ Angry \_\_\_\_\_ Anguished \_\_\_\_\_ Nothing \_\_\_\_\_
- 47.- How did she react? (Rank the answers)  
Surprised \_\_\_\_\_ Confused \_\_\_\_\_ Happy \_\_\_\_\_ Depressed \_\_\_\_\_  
Fearful \_\_\_\_\_ Angry \_\_\_\_\_ Anguished \_\_\_\_\_ Nothing \_\_\_\_\_
- 48.- Did you want a pregnancy at this moment of your life? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 49.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- 50.- If you could have, would you have preferred to interrupt the pregnancy?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 51.- If you could have, would you have preferred to postpone your partner's pregnancy? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 52.- Did your partner want the baby or did she suggest an abortion?  
She wanted to continue the pregnancy \_\_\_ She suggested to interrupt the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_
- 53.- How did your family (parents, siblings, uncles) react to your partner's pregnancy? Support \_\_\_\_\_ Rejection \_\_\_\_\_
- 54.- How? \_\_\_\_\_

55.- How did your partner's family (parents, siblings, uncles) react to her pregnancy? Support \_\_\_\_\_ Rejection \_\_\_\_\_

56.- How? \_\_\_\_\_

57.- Did you ever conceive being a father so young? Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_

58.- How did you tell your partner that you wanted a child?  
I want you to give me a child \_\_\_\_\_ I want us to have a child \_\_\_\_\_ I want you to have a child \_\_\_\_\_ You did not tell her anything \_\_\_\_\_ She told you she wanted a child \_\_\_\_\_

59.- If you were well in every sense (financially, in your relationship with your partner, etc.), how many children would you like to have? \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTRACEPTION USE AND KNOWLEDGE

60.- In your first sexual encounter, did you use any contraceptives?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

61.- In your following relationships, did you use any sort of contraceptive?

2nd. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3rd. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4th. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

In your present one? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

(If the previous answer is "yes")

62.- Who used the birth control? You \_\_\_ She\_\_\_

63.- What did you/she use? \_\_\_\_\_

64.- Have you talked as a couple about how to prevent a pregnancy?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

65.- How were you taking care to prevent a pregnancy? Withdrawal \_\_\_\_\_

Pills \_\_\_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_\_\_

Rhythm \_\_\_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_\_\_

We did not use contraception \_\_\_\_\_

66.- Do you know or have heard about the birth control methods?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

67.- What do you think about birth control methods? \_\_\_\_\_

68.- Who do you prefer to use them? You \_\_\_\_\_ Your partner \_\_\_\_\_

69.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

70.- Do you feel more comfortable in your sexual intercourse when it is "natural" (when neither one uses a contraceptive) Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

71.- Do you think or feel that contraceptives take out spontaneity from sex? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

72.- In case you use a contraceptive, do you feel you do it because (Rank the answer):

Fear of pregnancy? \_\_\_\_ Fear of venereal diseases? \_\_\_\_ Because your partner asks you to use it? \_\_\_\_ You only use it with your partner \_\_\_\_ You only use it when you have intercourse with other women \_\_\_\_

73.- Which contraceptive methods do you know? Pill \_\_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_\_ Tube Ligation \_\_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_\_

74.- Do you know or have you heard of: Pill \_\_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_\_ Tube Ligation \_\_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_\_

75.- Do you know how to use them:

Pill Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Rhythm Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Withdrawal Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Injection Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Foam Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Condom Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ IUD Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Tube Ligation Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Vasectomy Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Norplant Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

76.- Which contraceptive do you prefer? Pill \_\_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_\_ Tube Ligation \_\_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_\_

77.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

78.- Which contraceptive method do you think your partner would prefer?

Pill \_\_\_\_ Rhythm \_\_\_\_ Withdrawal \_\_\_\_ Injection \_\_\_\_ Foam \_\_\_\_ Condom \_\_\_\_ IUD \_\_\_\_ Vaginal Suppositories \_\_\_\_ Tube Ligation \_\_\_\_ Vasectomy \_\_\_\_ Norplant \_\_\_\_ Abortion \_\_\_\_

79.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

80.- Do you think contraceptives can cause any harm? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

81.- What sort of harm \_\_\_\_\_

82.- Do you think you can enjoy sex more: Using contraceptives \_\_\_\_  
Without using contraceptives \_\_\_\_

83.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

84.- Do you think contraceptives affect the sexual desire?:  
They diminish it \_\_\_\_ They increase it \_\_\_\_ They do not affect it \_\_\_\_

85.- Do you think that men experience any change in their sexual desire when  
women use a contraceptive? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ I do not know \_\_\_\_

86.- How? \_\_\_\_\_

87.- Have you ever used a condom? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

88.- When do you use it? Every time I have sex \_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_  
When my partner ask me to \_\_\_\_ Never, I don't like it \_\_\_\_  
Only when I have sex with other women \_\_\_\_

89.- Do you like to use a condom? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

90.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

### **SEXUAL AFFECTIVE LIFE**

91.- Are you presently involved with a partner? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

92.- How old is your partner? \_\_\_\_ years old

93.- What was your girlfriend/wife' s age when she got pregnant (actual  
pregnancy)?

94.- And yours (actual pregnancy)? \_\_\_\_

95.- Since when have you been living together?  
Less than 4 months \_\_\_\_ Between 4-6 months \_\_\_\_  
Between 6-12 months \_\_\_\_ Between 1-1.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 1.5-2 years \_\_\_\_ Between 2-2.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 2.5-3 years \_\_\_\_ Between 3-3.5 years \_\_\_\_  
Between 3.5-4 years \_\_\_\_ More than 4 years \_\_\_\_

96.- Do you mean you have been together \_\_\_\_ months/years?

97.- When did you start living together:  
0 to 3 months before the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_  
3 to 6 months before the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_  
1 year or more before the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_  
When the diagnose was given \_\_\_\_\_  
From the \_\_\_\_\_ month of the pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_

## **GENDER**

98.- What do you (or did you) want your first baby to be? Girl \_\_\_ Boy\_\_\_

99.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

100.- What does/did your partner want her first baby to be?: Girl?\_\_ Boy?\_\_\_

101.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

102.- Is a woman who is studying more attractive to you than one who is not?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

103.-Why? \_\_\_\_\_

104.- What career or profession do you consider interesting for a woman to have? \_\_\_\_\_

105.- Do you think that certain studies or careers don't go well with women?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

106.- Do you think that it is better for a woman to stay home with the children?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

107.- Do you think men should be better educated than women?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

108.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

109.- Would you rather support your partner economically until the baby is older? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

110.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

111.- What does it mean to you to be a father?  
\_\_\_\_\_

112.- Do you think that a child involves you more with your partner?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

- 113.- Do you think that women become pregnant to "trap" men?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ It depends\_\_\_\_\_
- 114.- Do you think every men wants to become a father? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 115.- Do you feel more of a man, now that you made your partner pregnant?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
- 116.- Do you think that your partner loves you more now that she is pregnant?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ The same as before \_\_\_\_
- 117.- A teenager becomes a woman when she has a baby? Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_
- 118.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- 119.- Do you think that from a women's point of view, a sterile woman is less of a woman? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 120.- Do you think that a sterile woman is less of a woman Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 121.- A woman is treated differently when she is a mother? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 122.- How is she treated differently? \_\_\_\_\_
- 123.- Do you think women feel that men give them more importance when they are pregnant? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
- 124.- Do you think men give women more importance when they are pregnant?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
- 125.- An unmarried woman with children is better seen than a married one who doesn't want to have children? Yes \_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
- 126.- By becoming a mother, a woman's importance increases? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- 127.- From which point of view? Legally \_\_\_\_ Socially \_\_\_\_  
Family wise \_\_\_\_ Because she has more rights \_\_\_\_
- 128.- Is a woman who has no children, capable of finding fulfilment in life?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
- 129.- A woman who does not want any children is worth:  
More \_\_\_\_ Less \_\_\_\_ The same \_\_\_\_
- 130.- What would your partner think if you decided not to have any children?  
She would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_  
She would get angry \_\_\_\_ She would be disappointed \_\_\_\_  
She would not care \_\_\_\_ She would leave you \_\_\_\_

131- What would your family think if you decided not to have any children?  
They would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_  
They would get angry \_\_\_\_ They would be disappointed \_\_\_\_  
They would not care \_\_\_\_ They would stop talking to you \_\_\_\_

132.- What would your partner's family think if you decided not to have any children?  
They would support you respecting your decision \_\_\_\_  
They would get angry \_\_\_\_  
They would be disappointed \_\_\_\_ They would not care \_\_\_\_  
They would stop talking to you \_\_\_\_

133.- Do you think that if a man knew beforehand that his partner could not have children, would he nevertheless marry her? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

134.- Do you think that a woman would leave her partner if she knew, before getting married, that he cannot have children? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

135.- What do you think is more probable:  
a) that a man leaves his partner if she does not want to have children  
b) that a woman leaves her partner if he does not want to have children

136.- Why is it important that a woman has children? (Rank the answers)  
It is the way to fulfil herself in life \_\_\_\_ To be socially accepted \_\_\_\_  
To satisfy her maternal instinct \_\_\_\_ To have someone to live for \_\_\_\_  
To have someone who will always love her \_\_\_\_ It is not important \_\_\_\_

137.- If you could only have same sex children, what would you prefer?  
Boys \_\_\_\_ Girls \_\_\_\_

138.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

139.- Do you believe that men like their partners to use contraceptives?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

140.- Why do you think some women do not use contraceptives? \_\_\_\_\_

141.- Why do you think some people do not use contraceptives?  
Fear of something happening to them \_\_\_\_  
Fear of making their partner angry \_\_\_\_ Ignorance \_\_\_\_  
Religious values \_\_\_\_ It is socially not well-seen \_\_\_\_  
It is too much trouble \_\_\_\_ To catch a partner \_\_\_\_  
Not knowing where to get the information \_\_\_\_  
Their desire overtakes them \_\_\_\_

142.- What do men do when it is the woman who wants to use contraceptives?  
They support her \_\_\_\_ They get angry \_\_\_\_  
They are disappointed \_\_\_\_ They show indifference \_\_\_\_  
They threaten to leave them \_\_\_\_ They are pleased \_\_\_\_

143.- What do they think? She is an easy woman \_\_\_\_  
She is a responsible woman \_\_\_\_ She is a woman who has had sexual  
experience with other men \_\_\_\_ She is a woman who takes care of her health  
\_\_\_\_ She is an intelligent woman \_\_\_\_

144.- Caring for birth control is the responsibility of: The woman \_\_\_\_  
The man \_\_\_\_ Both \_\_\_\_ Who ever thinks about it \_\_\_\_

145.- Do you believe that a woman who has sex for pleasure, and not to have  
children, is a bad woman? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

146.- Do you believe that for most men, a woman who has sex for pleasure and  
not for childbearing, is a "loose woman"? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
Some think this way \_\_

147.- To whom having sex is more important? To men \_\_ To women \_\_  
To both \_\_\_\_

148.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

149.- Who is usually less interested in having sex? Men \_\_\_\_ Women \_\_\_\_  
Both \_\_\_\_ Both have the same interest \_\_\_\_

150.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

151.- Who should take the initiative to have intercourse? Men \_\_\_\_  
Women \_\_\_\_ Both \_\_\_\_

152.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

153.- Do you consider "natural" for a man to have sex before marriage?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

154.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

155.- Do you consider "natural" for a woman to have sex before marriage?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

156.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

157.- Is it important that men have more sexual experience than women when  
they reach marriage? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

158.- Why? \_\_\_\_\_

159.- Is it better that women have more sexual experience than men?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_\_

160.- Do you consider that intercourse should only happen when there is love involved? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

161.- Do you think that intercourse can happen just to derive pleasure? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

162.- Do you think that a woman comes to an age when she does not care for sex anymore? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

163.- What age? 15-20 years \_\_\_\_ 21-25 years \_\_\_\_ 26-36 years \_\_\_\_  
37-45 years \_\_\_\_ more than 45 years \_\_\_\_

164.- Do you know what menopause is? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

165.- Do you believe that menopause ends with the sexual desire? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_ don't know \_\_\_\_

166.- Do you think that man's sexual desire disappears at a certain age?

167.- What age? 15-20 years \_\_\_\_ 21-25 years \_\_\_\_ 26-36 years \_\_\_\_  
37-45 years \_\_\_\_ 46-50 years \_\_\_\_ more than 50 years \_\_\_\_

168.- How would you define a "responsible man"?

---

169.- How would you define a "responsible woman"?

---

170.- What does it mean to you to be a man?

---

171.- In your sexual life, what does it mean to you to be a man?

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## APPENDIX II.- STATISTIC ANALYSIS OF BOTH THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

### FIGURES CHAPTER V.- Gender Discourses: Exploring Teen's Talk about Binaries and Hierarchies of Femininity and Masculinity in Mexico

Figure 5.1. Baby's sex choice

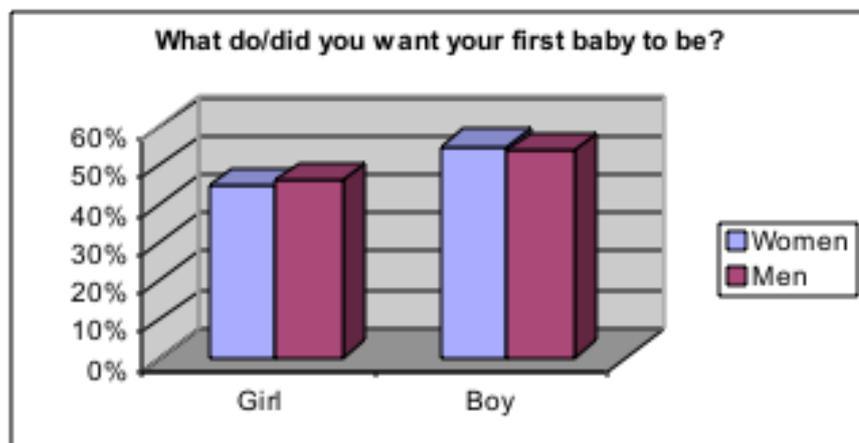
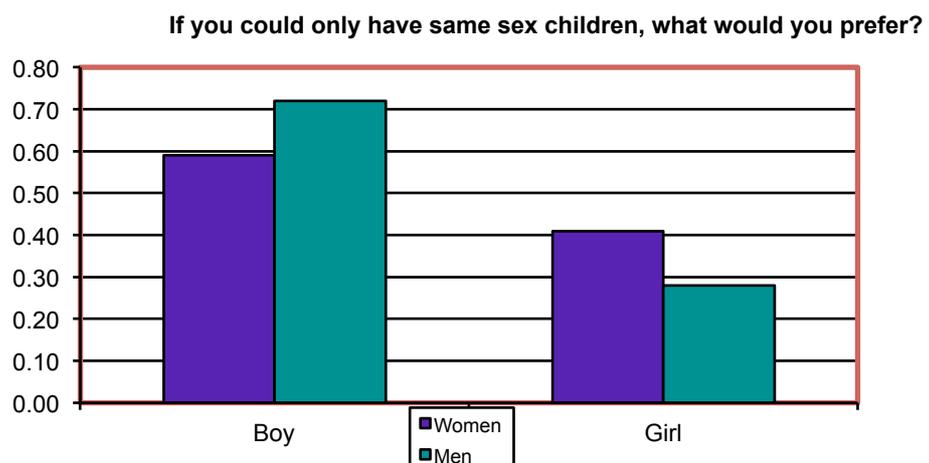
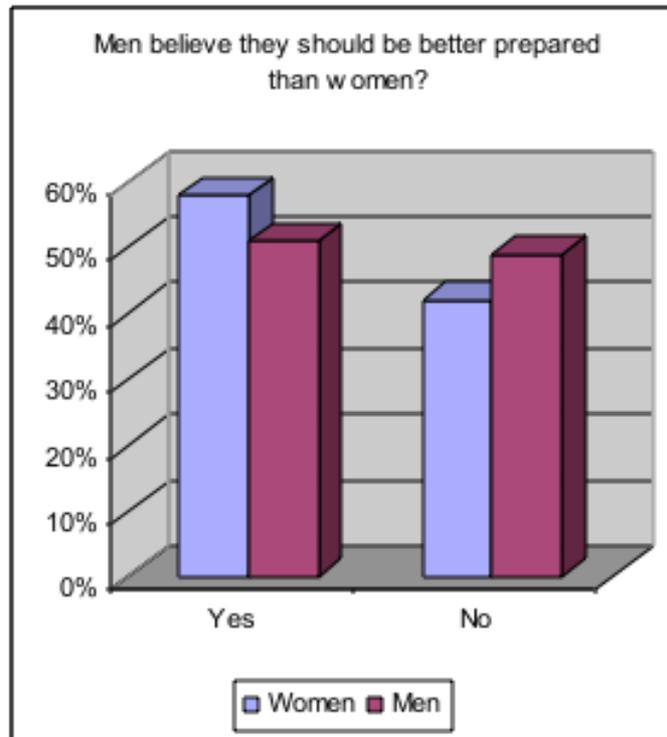


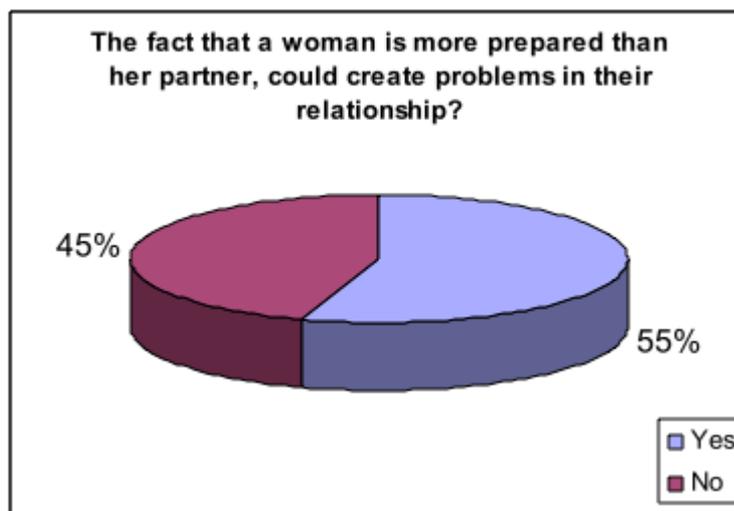
Figure 5.2 Preference of same sex children



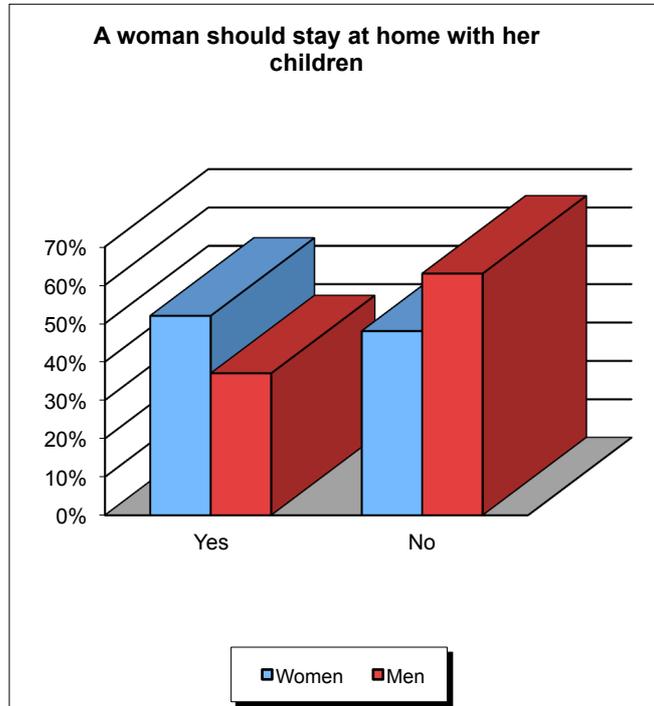
**Figure 5.3. Men's preparation vs. women's**



**Figure 5.4. Presence of conflict due to woman's degree of preparation**



**Figure 5.5. Woman's role**



## FIGURES CHAPTER VI.- Mexican Teen's Conceptions of Sexuality and Contraception

Figure 6.1. Intercourse just when there is love

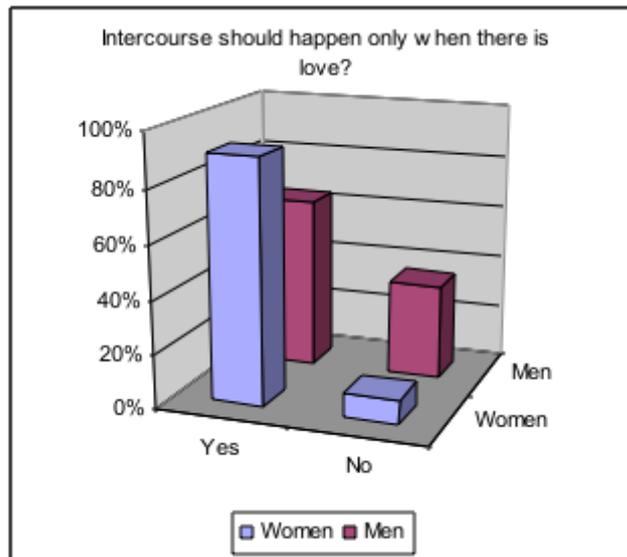
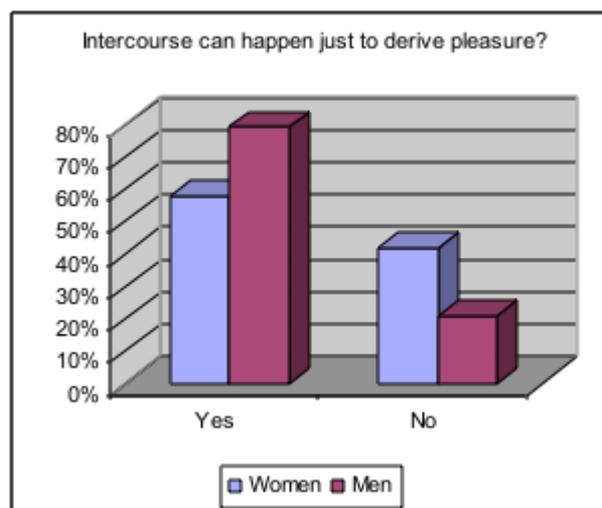
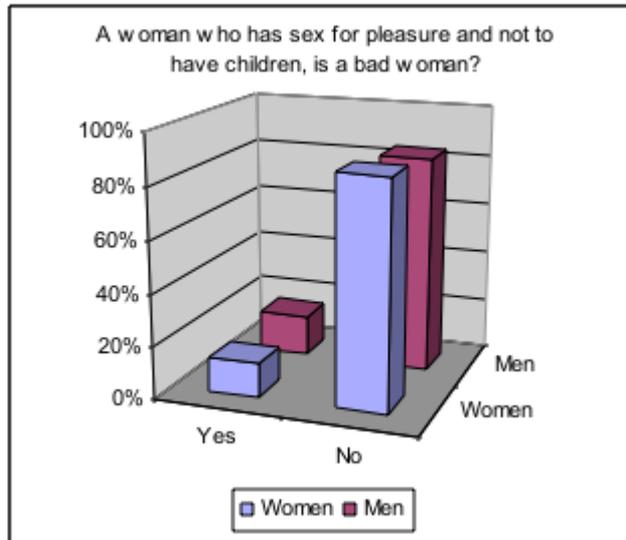


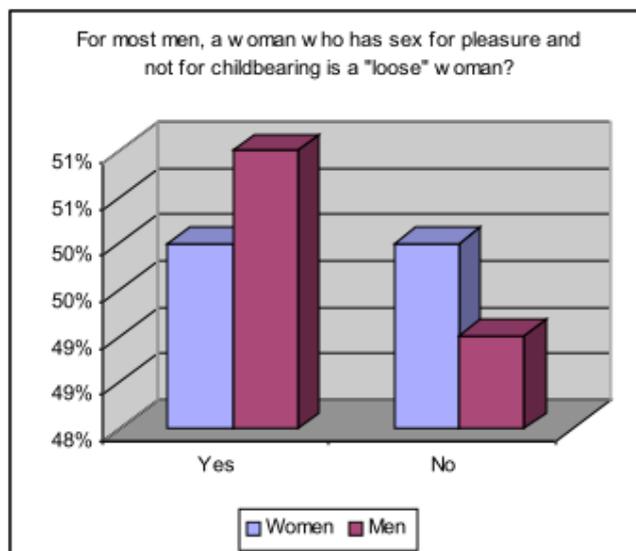
Figure 6.2. Intercourse to derive pleasure



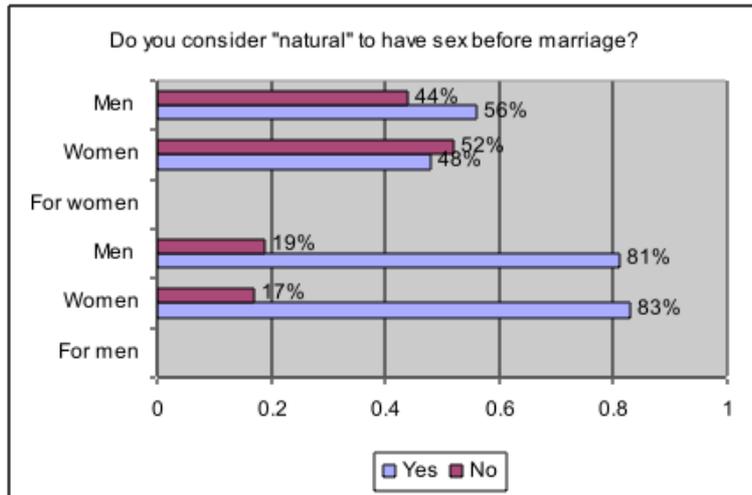
**Figure 6.3. Sex for pleasure = loose woman**



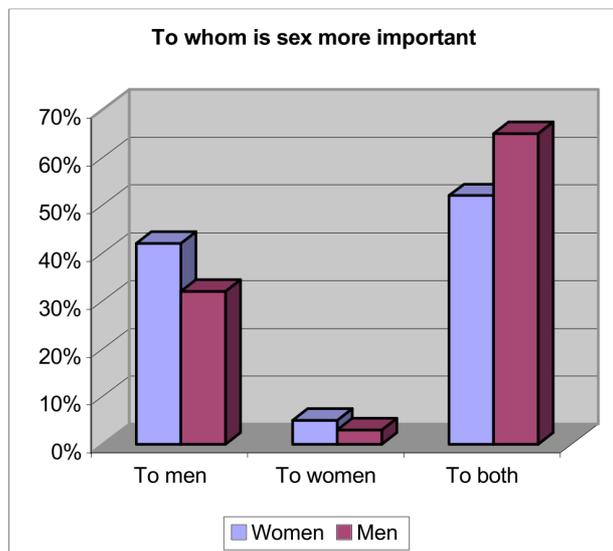
**Figure 6.4. From men's point of view sex for pleasure and not for procreation = loose woman/slut**



**Figure 6.5. Premarital sex**

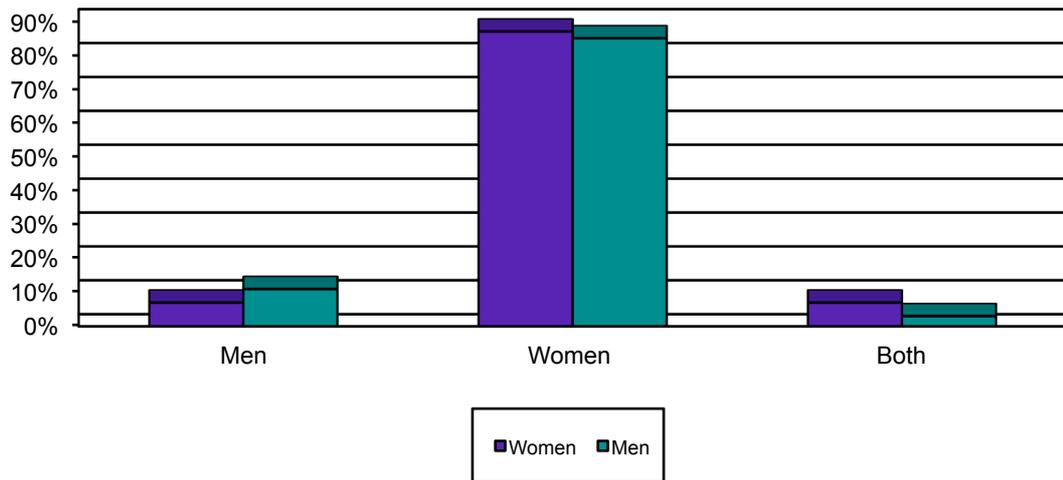


**Figure 6.6. Importance of sex based on gender**



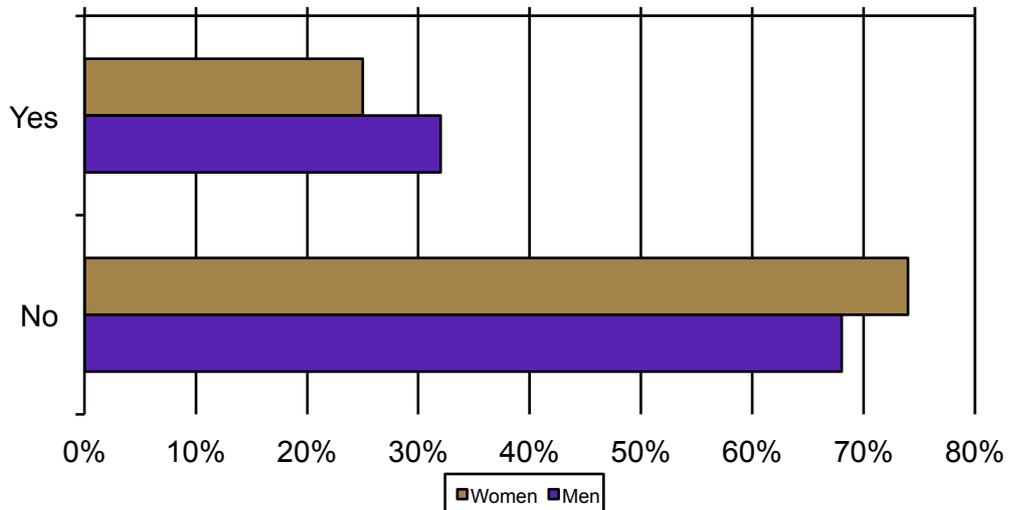
**Figure 6.7. Interest in sex by gender**

Who is usually less interested in sex?

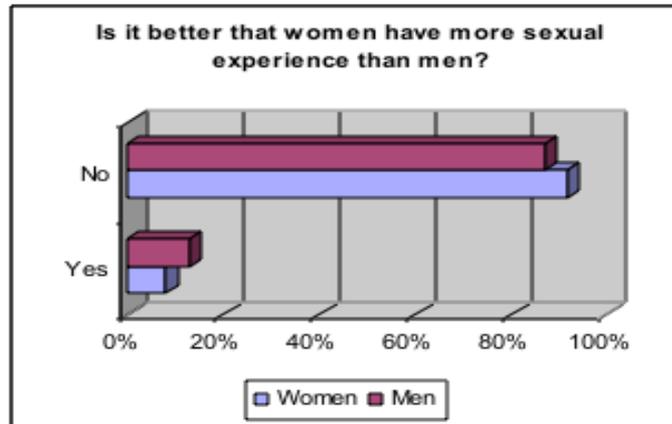


**Figure 6.8. Importance of sexual experience in men**

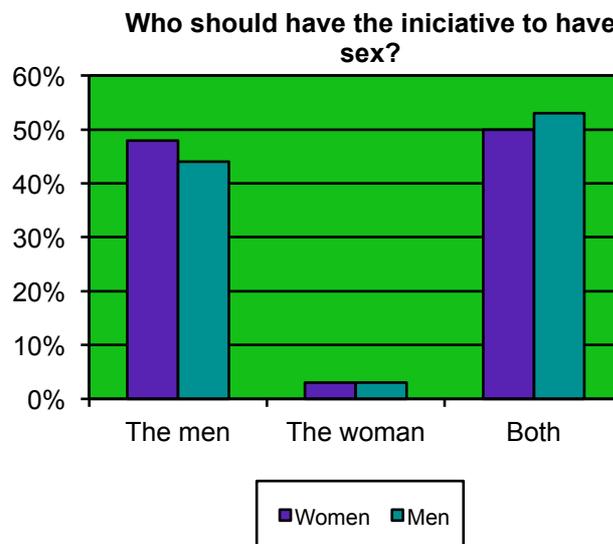
Is it important that men are more sexually experienced than women when they reach marriage?



**Figure 6.9. Benefits of woman's sexual experience vis-à-vis man's**



**Figure 6.10. Gender roles in the initiative to have sex**



## FIGURES CHAPTER VII. - Understandings of Gender and Parenting

Figure 7.1. Womanhood through motherhood

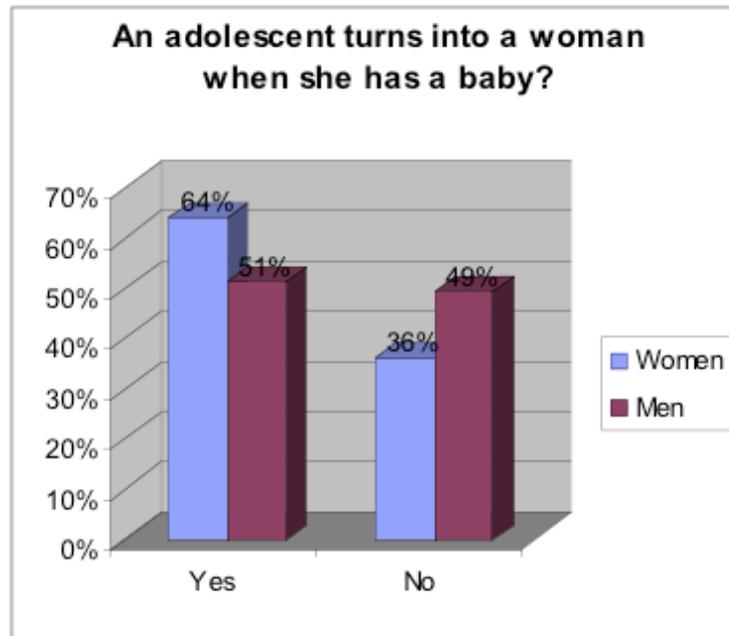
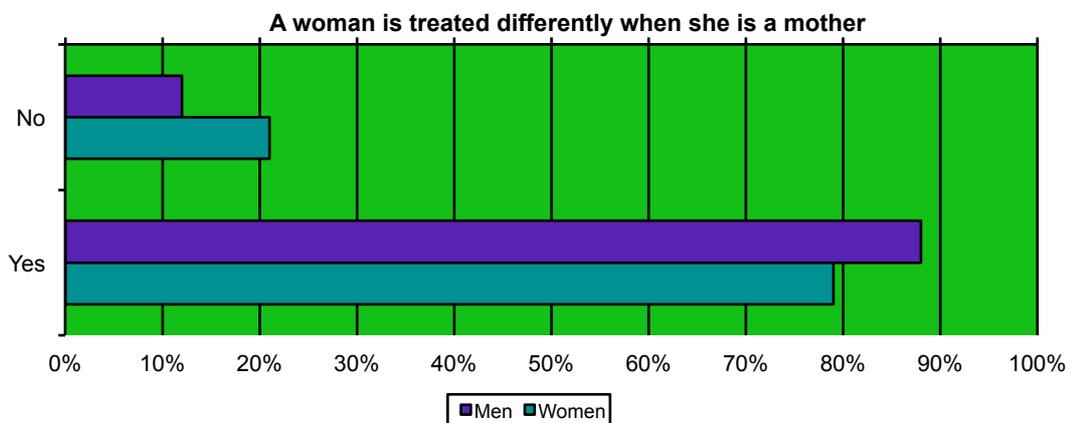
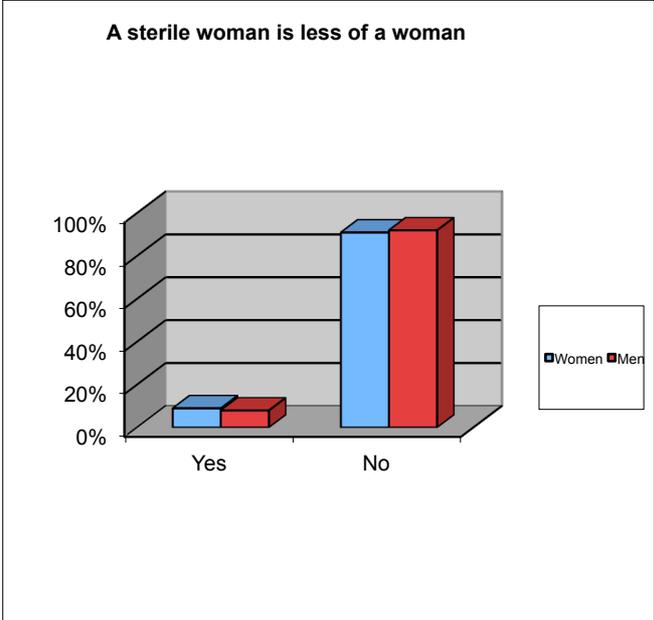


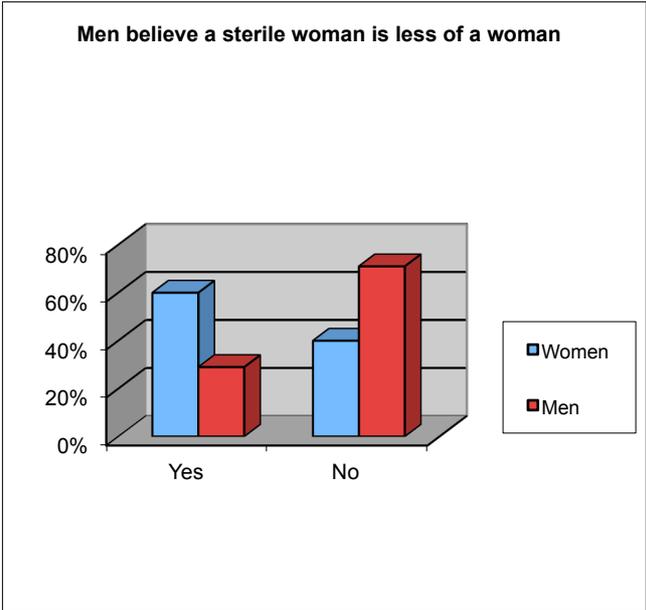
Figure 7.2. Difference in treating a mother and a woman



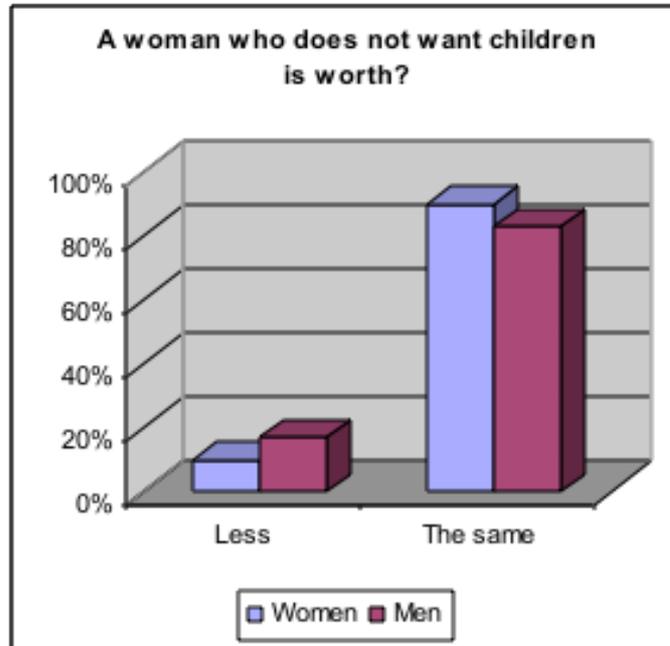
**Figure 7.3. Importance of woman's sterility**



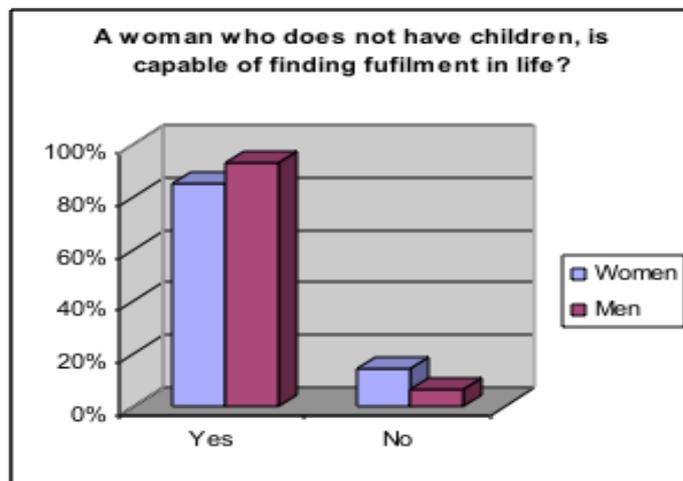
**Figure 7.4. Importance of woman's sterility for men**



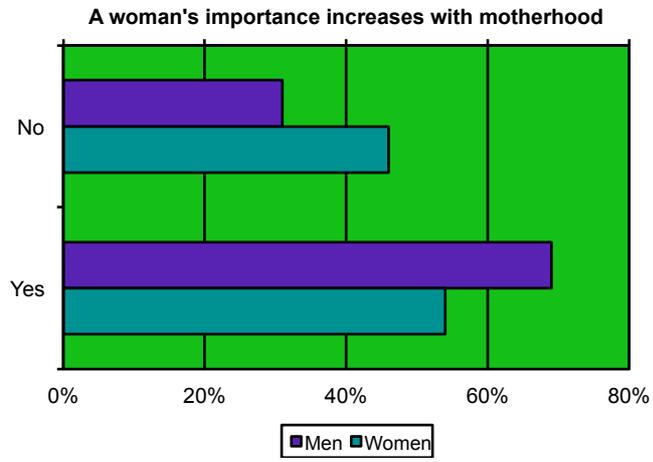
**Figure 7.5. Value of childless women**



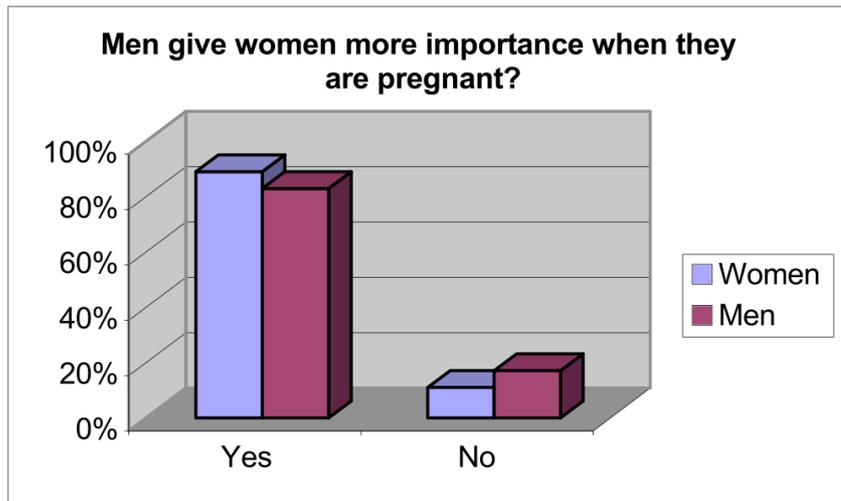
**Figure 7.6. Self- Fulfilment without motherhood**



**Figure 7.7. Value of women based on motherhood**



**Figure 7.8. Woman's value according to men based on motherhood**



**Figure 7.9. Manhood by making a woman pregnant**



**Figure 7.10. Man's love conditioned to pregnancy**

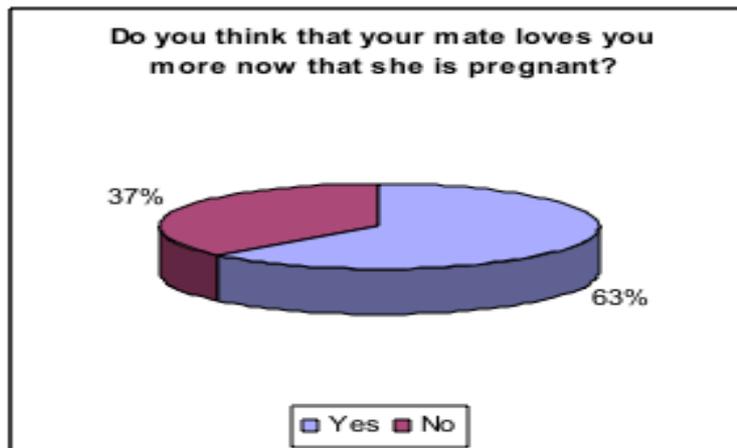
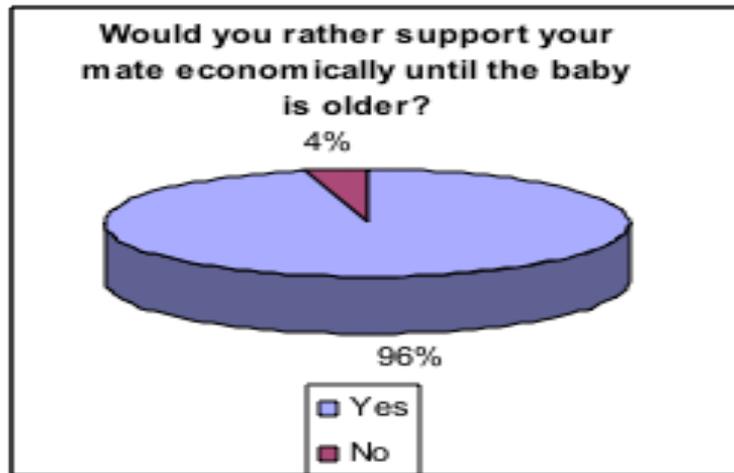


Figure 7.11. Man as provider until baby is older



**TABLES CHAPTER V.- GENDER DISCOURSES: EXPLORING TEEN'S  
TALK ABOUT BINARIES AND HIERARCHIES OF FEMININITY AND  
MASCULINITY IN MEXICO**

**Table 5.1. - Reasons for gender choice of first-born baby**

What do you (or did you) want your first baby to be?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Boy</b>				
No determined preference for such gender	55	31%	33	34%
Division of labour by gender: man as provider	1	1%	4	4%
Gender attributes	9	5%	10	10%
Quality of life expectation	33	18%	6	6%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Girl</b>				
No determined preference for such gender	36	20%	34	35%
Gender attributes	32	18%	11	11%
Division of labour by gender; woman as housewife/ emotional work	12	7%		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>46%</b>

**Table 5.2. Reasons for choosing a specific sex for same sex children**

If you could only have same sex children, what would you prefer?  Why?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Boy				
Quality of life expectation	43	26%	10	12%
Pregnancy as a woman's problem	5	3%	0	
Division of labour by gender; men as providers	10	6%	8	10%
No determined preference for such gender	23	14%	18	22%
Gender Attributes	17	10%	10	12%
Masculinity= Independence & Invulnerability	0	0%	13	16%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>72%</b>
Girl				
Gender Attributes	31	19%	13	16%
Division of labour by gender; domestic/emotional work	15	9%	0	0.0%
No determined preference for such gender	22	13%	10	12%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.3. Careers for women**

What career or profession do you consider interesting for a woman to have?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Biological & Health Sciences	31	18%	31	33%
Social Sciences	30	17%	21	23%
Technicians/Associate Professionals	26	15%	17	18%
Arts & Humanities	26	15%	5	5%
I don't know	26	15%	0	0%
All	15	9%	8	9%
Home	12	7%	4	4%
Physical & Mathematical Sciences & Engineering	6	4%	7	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 5.4. Woman attractiveness based on schooling**

Are women who are studying more attractive to men than those who are not? Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
Yes						
Woman as knowledgeable being	39	26%	78%	23	40%	55%
Students as sexual objects	10	6%	20%	8	14%	19%
Studies as enhancement of woman's role				6	10%	14%
Woman as an active person				4	7%	10%
Woman's independence/self-sufficiency	1	1%	2%	1	2%	2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>100%</b>
No						
Indifference or lack of interest in woman's education	64	42%	63%			
Femininity not synonymous with intelligence & education	22	15%	22%	10	17%	63%
Education questions gender hierarchy	15	10%	15%	6	10%	37%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 5.5. Importance of men's degree of preparation vis-à-vis women**

Does your man believe/do you believe a man should be better educated than a woman?  Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/ No%
Yes						
Division of labour by gender man as provider/woman as reproductive being	59	40%	67%	32	41%	89%
Masculinity implies being provider and authority	17	11%	19%			
Man's superiority	11	7%	12%	4	5%	11%
Male doing better	2	1%	2%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>100%</b>
No						
Logic in equality	53	35%	86%	29	37%	69%
Woman's doing better	9	6%	14%			
Family well-being				9	12%	21%
Equality in order to maintain status				4	5%	10%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 5.6. Difficulties due to woman's degree of preparation**

What kind of problems could create the fact that a woman is more educated than her partner?	Women	
	Frequency	Percent
Arguments/Power struggle	61	59%
Separation of the couple	29	28%
Problems which affect male self-esteem	14	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>
Why?	Frequency	Percent
Man's insecurities	46	47%
Jealousy/competition	29	30%
Level of training questions gender hierarchy	14	14%
Man's irresponsibility	9	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.7. Definition of manhood**

What is it for you to be a man?	Men	
	Frequency	Percent
Division of labour by gender/provider	30	37%
Psychological characteristics	14	17%
Superiority/control over the woman	12	15%
Advantages	7	9%
Respectful/protector	7	9%
Don't know	7	9%
Procreate	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.8. Definition of womanhood**

What does it mean to you to be a woman?	Women	
	Frequency	Percent
Motherhood	56	32%
Division of labour by gender/woman as housewife	38	22%
Self fulfilment/Independence	23	13%
Don't know	15	9%
Equality/superiority with regard to the man	11	6%
Disadvantaged position with regard to the man	9	5%
Receive attention and compliments	8	4%
Physical characteristics	5	3%
Vulnerability	5	3%
Nothing special	5	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.9. Definition of a responsible woman and man**

What is for you a "responsible" woman?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Division of labour by gender	101	62%	58	73%
Psychological maturity	31	19%	18	23%
Independent	18	11%		
Trustworthy and reliable	12	7%		
I don't know	2	1%		
Reproductive knowledge			3	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100%</b>
What is for you a "responsible" man?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Division of labour by gender: man as provider and protector	110	55%	40	45%
Trustworthy and reliable	45	22%		
Active fathering	43	21%		
Good personal hygiene	4	2%		
Psychological maturity			36	41%
Emotional provider			12	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLES CHAPTER VI.- Mexican Teen’s Conceptions of Sexuality and Contraception.**

**Table 6.1. Meaning of manhood in sexuality**

In your sexual life, what does it mean To you to be a man?	Frequency	Percent
To sexually satisfy and protect the woman	31	38.8%
Demand for male sexual performance	22	27.5%
Superiority/control over the woman	13	16.3%
Don't know	6	7.5%
Decide about the pregnancy	5	6.3%
Nothing	3	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 6.2. Views about premarital sex for man**

Do you consider "natural" for a man to have intercourse before marriage? Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
Yes						
Changes in the attitudes toward sexuality	45	27%	35%	24	31%	38%
Acceptance of woman as a sexual being	26	15%	21%			
Demands for male sexual performance	22	13%	17%	17	22%	27%
Male-hyper sexuality	15	9%	12%	12	15%	19%
Advantages related to sexuality	14	8%	11%			
Criterion for the choice of stable partner	5	3%	4%	11	14%	16%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>100%</b>
No						
Virginity as a condition for marriage	16	9%	42%	10	12%	72%
Criterion for the choice of stable partner						
Fear of pregnancy/diseases	7	4%	18%	2	3%	14%
Moral considerations	6	4%	16%	2	3%	14%
Virginity as a method of men exercising power over women	6	4%	16%			
Woman as sexual being vs. social control of sexuality	3	2%	8%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Don't know	3	2%	100%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 6.3. Views about premarital sex for women**

Do you consider "natural" for a woman to have intercourse before marriage? Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
Yes						
Changes in the attitudes towards sexuality	45	19%	47%	20	25%	42%
Woman as sexual being vs. social control of sexuality	43	19%	45%	28	35%	58%
Criterion for the choice of stable partner	5	2%	5%			
Don't know	3	1%	3%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>
No						
Virginity as a condition for marriage	44	19%	33%	18	22%	55%
Demands for male sexual performance	24	10%	18%			
Woman as sexual being vs. social control of sexuality	17	7%	13%	6	7%	18%
Virginity as a method of men exercising power over women	14	6%	10%	8	10%	24%
Fear of pregnancy/diseases	14	6%	10%	1	1%	3%
Advantages related to male sexuality	14	6%	10%			
Moral considerations	6	3%	4%			
Male hyper-sexuality	3	1%	2%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 6.4. Reasons for the importance of sex by gender**

To whom is sex more important? Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
To the man						
Male hyper-sexuality	52	33%	79%	19	25%	76%
Proof of manhood	4	3%	6%	6	8%	24%
Fatherhood	3	2%	5%			
Control/power	3	2%	5%			
Advantages associated with masculine sexuality	3	2%	5%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>100%</b>
To the woman						
Intercourse as an expression of love and commitment	4	3%	50%			
Equality in terms of pleasure	2	1%	25%			
Motherhood	2	1%	25%			
Promiscuity				1	1%	50%
Women do it for love				1	1%	50%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>
To both						
Equality in terms of desire/need/right	60	38%	71%	37	48%	74%
Intercourse as an element of cohesiveness of the couple	15	10%	18%	7	9%	14%
Intercourse as an expression of love and commitment	5	3%	6%	3	4%	6%
Desire for a child	4	3%	5%	3	4%	6%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>77</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 6.5. Less interest in sex by gender**

Who is usually less interested in sex?  Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
The man						
Lack of interest on intercourse	7	4%	64%			
Lesser emotional involvement	4	2%	36%	6	7%	60%
Work worries				4	5%	40%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
The woman						
Desexualisation of women	85	49%	58%	22	25%	29%
Fear of a pregnancy	22	13%	15%	16	18%	21%
Male- hyper sexuality	17	10%	11%	18	20%	23%
Stigma of female sexual activity	9	5%	6%	4	5%	5%
Personality characteristics	8	5%	5%	7	7%	8%
Don't know	5	3%	3%	2	2%	3%
Fear of diseases	3	2%	2%	4	5%	5%
Marriage as a condition				2	2%	3%
Fear of intercourse				2	2%	3%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>100%</b>
They both have the same interest						
Equality in terms of desire/pleasure	11	6%	85%	1	1%	50%
Don't know	2	1%	15%	1	1%	50%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>89</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Table 6.6. Reasons for importance of sexual experience in men**

Is it important that men have more sexual experience than women when they reach marriage? Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
Yes						
Man as initiator: power	29	18%	71%	16	21%	64%
Male hyper sexuality	7	5%	17%			
For the woman's benefit	5	3%	12%			
Man as initiator: erotic ability				9	12%	36%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>100%</b>
No						
Equality in terms of experience	59	37%	51%	31Y	41%	61%
Experience is irrelevant	41	26%	35%	8	11%	16%
Don't know	9	6%	8%	2	2%	3%
Virginity as a symbol of purity	7	5%	6%			
Experience questions fidelity				7	9%	14%
Alleged superiority of man				3	4%	6%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Table 6.7. Reasons for gender roles in the initiation of sex**

Who should take the initiative to have sex? Why?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No %
The Man						
Male hyper sexuality				15	28%	44%
Stigma of female sexual activity				10	19%	29%
Man's role				9	17%	27%
Woman as a sexual being	2	3%	100%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>100%</b>
The Woman						
Woman's power	5	7%	100%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Both						
Equality in terms of desire/pleasure	68	90%	100%	18	32%	90%
Wish of woman's participation				2	4%	10%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## TABLES CHAPTER VII. - Understandings of Gender and Parenting

**Table 7.1. Reasons to believe that womanhood comes with motherhood**

A teenager turns into a woman when She has a baby?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%
Yes						
Psychological criterion	77	50.7%	79.4%	37	46.8%	86.0%
Physiological/sexual criterion	20	13.2%	20.6%	6	7.6%	14.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>63.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>54.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
No						
Psychological criterion	28	18.4%	50.0%	30	38.0%	83.0%
Physiological/sexual criterion	7	4.6%	14.0%	3	3.8%	9.0%
Greater autonomy	14	9.2%	25.0%			
Age consideration	6	3.9%	11.0%	3	3.8%	9.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Table 7.2. Reasons for the importance of motherhood for women**

Why is it important that a woman has children?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
To have someone to live for	125	31%	16	6%
To have someone who will always love her	105	26%	36	14%
To satisfy her maternal instinct	83	20%	20	8%
To fulfill herself in life	60	15%	52	20%
It is not important that she has children	20	5%	62	24%
To be socially accepted	12	3%	71	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7.3. Differences in treatment when a woman is a mother**

How is a woman treated differently when she is a mother?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No %	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No %
Positive change						
Social recognition/prestige	66	51.2%	65.0%	35	44.3%	46.0%
Worship of the mother	36	27.9%	35.0%	28	35.4%	36.0%
Acquisition of an adult status				13	16.5%	18.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>79.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>
Negative change						
Loss of adolescent status	17	13.2%	62.0%			
People's rejection of single mothers	10	7.8%	38.0%	3	3.8%	100.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		<b>79</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Table 7.4. Importance given my men to pregnant women**

Do you think men give women more Importance when they are pregnant?	Women			Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No%	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No %
Yes						
Social recognition/prestige	90	52%	58%	62	82.7%	83.0%
Worship of the mother	64	37%	42%	13	17.30%	17.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
No						
Reaction against the worship of the mother	19	11%	100%			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>100%</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Table 7.5. Meaning of fatherhood**

What does it mean to you to be a father?	Men	
	Frequency	Percent
Economic and emotional provider	56	51.9%
Satisfaction	25	23.1%
Acquiring status	8	7.4%
Father as a teacher	7	6.5%
To belong to a nuclear family	5	4.6%
Problems /restrictions	2	1.9%
To have a baby	2	1.9%
To be born again	2	1.9%
Reason to be loyal	1	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 7.6. Reasons for wanting a pregnancy now**

Did you want a pregnancy at this moment of your life? Why?	Men		
	Frequency	Percent	Yes/No %
Yes			
Wish to have a child as a couple	16	18.2%	39.0%
Personal gratification	15	17.0%	37.0%
Wish to be a father	10	11.4%	24.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
No			
Frustration of plans	16	18.2%	34.0%
Economic reasons	10	11.4%	21.0%
Age	9	10.2%	19.0%
Rejection to the responsibility	8	9.1%	17.0%
Conflictive family relationship	2	2.3%	4.0%
Lack of emotional stability	2	2.3%	4.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

**Table 7.7. Reason for men being the provider until the baby is older**

Why would you rather support your mate economically until the baby is older?	Men	
	Frequency	Percent
Division of labour by gender: woman as caregiver	50	64.9%
Division of labour by gender: man as provider and protector	22	28.6%
Depending on economic need	3	3.9%
So she can study	1	1.3%
For woman's health	1	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 7.8. Fertility as a condition for marriage for men**

If a man knew beforehand that his mate could not have children, would he nevertheless marry her?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	86	57%	38	51%
No	65	43%	37	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7.9. Fertility as a condition for marriage for women**

A woman would leave her mate if she knew, before getting married, that he cannot have children?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	46%	41	55%
No	82	54%	34	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7.10. Relationship based on procreation**

	Women: What do you think is more probable?		Men: What do you think is more probable?	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
That a man leaves his mate if she does not want to have children	115	76%	53	71%
That a woman leaves her mate if he does not want to have children	36	24%	22	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7.11. Partner' s reaction when faced with possibility of not having a baby**

How would your mate react if you decided not to have any children?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Support you	20	13%	20	27%
Get angry	30	20%	15	20%
Get disappointed	45	30%	25	33%
Would not care	11	7%	3	4%
Would leave you	45	30%	12	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7.12. Nuclear family's reaction when faced with the possibility of not having a grandchild**

How would your family react if you decided not to have any children?	Women		Men	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Support you	20	13%	29	39%
Get angry at you	30	20%	16	21%
Get disappointed	45	30%	14	19%
Would not care	11	7%	14	19%
Would stop talking to you	45	30%	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>